

Going Green: Sustainable Interior Design

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The word green has been floating around for years. Recently, however, more people are looking to create green residential and commercial buildings. Want to be more sustainable yourself? Learn more below.

Introduction

Green or sustainable interior design is a relatively new field in interior designing. Spawnd by the desire and need to use products that will not hurt our environment, [interior design professionals](#) and homeowners alike are looking for ways to make [green residential and commercial areas](#).

Natural resources in this world are scarcer and are getting scarcer. According to the Washington State Department of Ecology, to be considered environmentally sustainable means to meet "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." So, basically, this means what we use today will still be available for generations to come.

Reclaimed Materials

When designing a new building or redesigning an older one, the best way to be sustainable and green is to start with the materials that are used in these new green buildings. Recycled materials are a great way to do this. You can get everything from recycled wood to recycled drywall and sheetrock to reclaimed wood.

Often, you can find these materials in salvage yards. Reclamation companies go in when buildings are being torn down and salvage anything that they can. Reclaimed flooring can be refinished and stained and then put down in a new building. Even light fixtures can be bought, which not only saves these from the landfill, but makes for some rather interesting conversational pieces. Furniture can also be bought from salvage yards as well.

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Flooring and Lighting

Another way to be green is by buying flooring that can be grown sustainably. Bamboo is a prime example since bamboo can be cut down every three to six years. Plus, it's just as pretty as the common hardwood floors.

[Green lighting](#) is a very important part of sustainable designing. Compact fluorescent bulbs should be switched out to more energy efficient (CFL) bulbs. They not only last longer, but they produce a lot less carbon dioxide. Another way to cut down on your energy use is through Energy Star rated appliances. They'll also reduce your monthly energy bill.

Everything Else

Tank-less water heaters are also a great way to cut down on energy use. Since they don't use a tank, you don't have to wait for hot water to fill up the tank before you can use it. They only heat your water when there's a demand for it so there's no heat loss. Plus, you're not wasting water by having to run the faucet until you get hot water.

You should also consider solar panels or [solar heating systems](#), which will cut down on your energy bill. There are also greener paints on the market that put out lower levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). VOCs create bad indoor air quality and can be toxic to some people. Examples of paints with lower VOCs include Auro Natural Paints, Benjamin Moore Eco-Spec and Aura line paints and Amazon Environmental, Inc.

If you're personally trying to make a green home, take your time. New technology is always coming out so there's no need to buy everything all at once.

