

Good LIVING

HOME, STYLE, BEAUTY, HEALTH

PANE POINTERS

Windows are the eyes to your home's soul, and the source of many an energy leak: They can account for up to 30 percent of the amount used for heating and cooling. Triple-pane windows are ideal (that's what ultra-low-energy, or passive, houses often have), but installing storm windows is an affordable alternative. "They're like wearing an extra layer in the winter," says Marco Vincent, architectural project manager at Marvin.

Painted cedar shingles and durable Hardie Artisan composite "planks" cover this Virginia home by Moore Architects, PC.

Green Up Your Life

In addition to its foundation, walls, and beams, your home is built on the decisions you make.

Some are big ones—replacing the roof or the water heater—while others are smaller, daily choices that arise every time you step in the shower, flick on the lights, or do the laundry.

But all of them affect the environment. To help you live lighter and more sustainably, we enlisted the help of experts. From instant and inexpensive upgrades to long-term investments, this room-by-room guide offers eco-friendly ideas with lasting style.

TEXT BY RIMA SUQI

No-VOC paints cut your exposure to toxins like benzene. In this 1897 Massachusetts farmhouse-turned-LEED-home by Green Phoenix Development, the walls are covered in Benjamin Moore Aura paint in White Dove.

Pella Architect Series double-paned, double-glazed windows closely match the 19th-century originals they replaced.

Heart pine salvaged from an old mill was used for the beams and mantel.

Live-sawn solid white-oak floors sport a low-VOC matte polyurethane finish.

Big Ideas

These tips will help your entire home.

1. REACH FOR THE ENERGY STARS

That is, LED bulbs with that label. They use 70 to 90 percent less electricity than incandescent, and last 10 to 25 times longer. Look for 2,700 to 3,000 kelvins to cast a warm, ambient light. We like Cree bulbs (from \$4.50 for 2, homedepot.com). To stretch their lives (and lower your bill even more), set them on a dimmer.

2. STOP WATER LEAKS

Act before they wreak havoc. Ask a plumber to install a system like Grohe's Sense Guard in your main water line (\$681, grohe.us); it monitors the pressure and will shut off the supply and alert you via an app if it senses a change.

3. DO AN ENERGY AUDIT

Hire an expert to find out how much your home wastes. She'll examine it from attic to basement, do a blower-door test for air leaks (among other checks), and review your energy bills. The average cost in the U.S. is \$300 to \$800; find a pro at hersindex.com.

4. GET SERIOUS ABOUT SOLAR

It's an investment, but a smart one, since "panelists" get a 30 percent tax rebate and lower bills. Tesla's new Solar Roof tiles even look like regular shingles. First, see if your roof's a fit. The climate and its shape, angle, and age factor in; south-facing ones with a 15- to 40-degree slope work best. For advice, call a North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners-approved contractor, says solar expert Johnny Weiss.

POWER DOWN

A surge protector you can turn off with a single switch defangs vampire energy suckers like TVs and audio equipment. No-frills ones cost \$20 or less, but for a device you'll want to display, we love Conway Electric's retro-cool designs. They even come in Martha Blue (\$199, conwaygoods.com).

ADD A BREEZE

Ceiling fans cool people, not rooms, say the experts at Energy Star. So never run one in an empty space. That said, do use your fans year-round. Just swap the direction they spin with the seasons: counter-clockwise in the summer and clockwise in the winter. The latter direction produces a gentle updraft, forcing warm air down.

The Lighter Living Room

BUY KINDER FURNITURE

Look for the Sustainable Furnishings Council (SFC) seal. Its top-rated makers include Lee Industries, Cisco Home, Gat Creek, and Room & Board; find more picks at sustainablefurnishings.org. Also consider well-made vintage items, like Knoll tables and Chesterfield sofas, says SFC ambassador and NYC interior designer John Douglas Eason.

ROLL OUT ECO RUGS

Swap a rubber doormat for sisal or jute. To cover (and insulate) larger areas, lay down a pad made of wool, felt, or plant-based materials (like soybean oil) with Green Label Plus or Greenguard low-chemical-emissions certification. Top it with a 100 percent-wool rug without stain- or waterproofing. For cleaning tips, see marthastewart.com/rugcleaning.



GOOD LIVING HOME

The extra-wide range hood in Green Phoenix's Massachusetts reno whisks away even more cooking fumes.

Two induction burners (about twice as efficient as gas, and genius for jobs like boiling water) supplement the Wolf range. Nothing sears like gas, but many pro kitchens use induction for everything else.

A Smarter Kitchen

| GREENER GOODS |

Run your dishwasher daily. An efficient machine can use around three gallons per load, compared with the up to 20 that handwashing can take. German maker Miele has the top-rated Energy Star models (from \$1,400, miele.com).

Revamp Your Pantry

BULK BINS are an eco shopper's best friend, but many are on hiatus. For now, Anna Marino, owner of the Alexandria, Virginia, zero-waste dry-goods shop Mason & Greens, advises buying the largest size of staples like beans and flour, and decanting them into

Weck jars or up-cycled empties. And mind the GAP, she says: Glass over Aluminum packaging, Aluminum over Plastic. "Glass is forever recyclable. Aluminum is too, but it may have BPAs. Plastics are full of chemicals, and most can't be recycled."

CONSIDER CABINETRY

When installing a new set, go with wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC); the glues that bind compressed wood can off-gas toxins like formaldehyde. **Even better, think local—and opt for open shelves:** "We used reclaimed wood from our property," says Austin, Texas, architect and interior designer Laura Britt, who built her own LEED home. "They do require some dusting, but they took less material than cabinet boxes with doors." **To refresh existing cabinets, replace only the fronts,** says *Living* home editor Lorna Aragon: "You'll get a new look and toss less material." If the boxes are compressed wood, brushing on a clear sealant like AFM Safecoat will help contain VOCs (\$22 a qt., dwellsmart.com).

... AND COUNTERS

Salvaged stone and wood are the most sustainable, lowest-emitting materials. Restaurant-style stainless steel is basically indestructible. **All-natural stone composites are great, too.** ColorQuartz is shown above, and Britt recommends Dekton, a new composite from the maker of Silestone. It's stain-, scratch-, and heat-resistant and comes in more than 70 colors. She loves how practical it is: "I can take a hot pan out of the oven and set it down right on it; it's that resilient."

WIN \$25K

To get help with a kitchen refresh, visit marthastewart.com/Refresh25k and enter to win \$25,000. For details, see page 102.

TAP A BETTER FAUCET

You may not think you need your sink to talk to Siri, but choose features that help you conserve water. Many brands offer touchless-sensor fixtures that turn off after 10 seconds but also have a manual lever for, say, filling a pasta pot. **Integrated filters are a handy alternative to reaching for bottled water** (it takes at least twice as much water to produce a plastic bottle as it does to fill it). **Go to the Environmental Working Group's Tap Water Database to ID the pollutants in your water and find a filter that removes them** (ewg.org). Activated-carbon pitchers or faucet-mounted taps are quick, inexpensive fixes; Elkay's ezH2O Liv bottle-filling station is a convenient upgrade (from \$1,440, elkay.com).

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREG PREMUR; PROJECT BY GREEN PHOENIX DEVELOPMENT

Low-Impact Laundry

UPGRADE YOUR WASHER

A full-size Energy Star model uses 14 gallons of water a load, versus 20 for a standard machine. Also, pick a front loader. It will hold 30 percent more than a top loader with an agitator, and use less water and energy. Whirlpool's Load & Go dispenser even adds the right amounts of water and detergent automatically.

TRY A NEW KIND OF DRYER

Consider gas-powered models. They're not common in the U.S. (only a quarter of homes have one) but should be: They dry twice as fast as electric, with less static and fewer wrinkles. Ventless heat-pump electric ones, like Bosch's new 500 series, also use far less energy and go anywhere with a 240-volt outlet (\$1,399, homedepot.com).

AND USE THEM BOTH WISELY

Washers require about the same amount of energy regardless of the size of the load, so fill 'er up, say Energy Star experts. Be sure to use high-efficiency (HE) detergent if you have an HE machine; the regular kind makes too many suds. And to optimize your dryer's heat, put loads in one immediately after the other.

| GREENER GOODS |

Check the label before you put soap or lotion on your body (and into our waterways). Avoid formaldehyde, parabens, phthalates, sodium lauryl sulfate/sodium laureth sulfate, and synthetic fragrances.

Clean Up Your Bathroom

TIMELESS TILE

There's a reason design pros adore subway tile: It's clean-looking and versatile, and will never appear dated, says Brooklyn interior designer K.D. Reid. Go to American makers that use local or recycled materials and sustainable manufacturing processes, like Daltile, Heath, Atlas Concorde USA, and Kohler's Made by Ann Sacks collection.

SUSTAINABLE STEAM

Here are two good motives for upgrading to a tankless water heater: You'll always have plenty, and you won't waste energy keeping reserves warm. For households that use 41 gallons or less a day (typically those with up to four members), they can be 34 percent more efficient than conventional.

SAVVY FIXTURES

Look for toilets, faucets, and showerheads with the EPA's WaterSense label. These use 20 percent less water on average than most others—for a family of four, just the toilet can save about 16,000 gallons a year—and, contrary to popular belief, maintain good, strong water pressure. Lorna suggests Kohler's Purist line (from \$102, us.kohler.com).

THOUGHTFUL TOWELS

Stock cotton ones with the OEKO-Tex Standard 100 seal, for textiles free of harmful substances. The Martha Stewart Collection for Macy's Quick-Dry towels also take less time and energy to launder (from \$12 each, macys.com).

SWITCH TO PLANT-BASED DETERGENT.

It's free of chemicals and microbeads that can irritate your skin, damage textiles, and pollute waterways. For everyday use, we like Dropps pods (from \$24 for 56 loads, dropps.com); for dreamy sheets, The Laundress Le Labo Rose (\$45 for 32 loads, thelaundress.com) is a worthy splurge.

A Better Bedroom

MEET A NEW MATTRESS

The latest and greatest have Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) certification, or Global Organic Latex Standard (GOLS) certification for organic latex. Britt likes her IntelliBed (from \$3,299, intellibed.com): "It's super-comfortable, and you can get wool toppers at different densities." Another plus: You don't need to flip most latex mattresses, and you can rotate them less often than innersprings (once or twice a year, as opposed to seasonally), since they bounce back like champs. Otherwise, just spot-clean any stains on the cover.

SCREEN YOUR SHEETS

To know if they're organic and ethically sourced, look for OEKO-Tex Standard 100 (the same as for towels), Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), Cradle to Cradle, and/or Fair Trade certification on the label. Red Land cotton is grown in Alabama (from \$30 for 2 pillowcases, redlandcotton.com). Linen and hemp (except for white hemp, which is chemically bleached) are even stronger and have a smaller environmental impact. Rough Linen (from \$36 for 2 pillowcases, roughlinen.com) and Area (from \$80 for 2 pillowcases, areahome.com) are sturdy yet soft options.

COVER THE WINDOWS

Shades or drapes don't just darken your sleep space; they insulate it. Good ones can cut winter heat loss by up to 10 percent, and summer heat gain by up to 33 percent, per the U.S. Department of Energy. Look for styles with the Attachments Energy Rating Council (AERC) seal, which measures energy performance, like Hunter Douglas Duettes and Sonnette cellular shades (hunterdouglas.com).

Kid Cues

Let these guidelines govern your decisions from the nursery on.

CHECK FINISHES

Make sure cribs and wooden items are coated with a water-based stain or no-VOC paint, says Hallmark Home & Family DIY expert and dad of three Ken Wingard.

BUY CONVERTIBLES

Invest in items that grow up, too. Wingard likes Oxo's Sprout high chair (\$250, oxo.com). And the Martha Stewart Everyday 4-Foot Home Office transitions from Legos to laptops (\$1,105, shop.californiaclosets.com).

REST EASY

Babies and toddlers spend even more time than we do in bed. Naturalmat crib mattresses are made of only natural fibers (from \$424, naturalmatusa.com).

L.A. interior designer Allison Ochmanek Boesch used Benjamin Moore's no-VOC, allergy- and asthma-friendly Natura paint in Moonlight White in this Pacific Palisades, California, home.



The bed is made up with OEKO-Tex Standard 100 certified linen from Parachute.

CULL YOUR CLOSET

To build a timeless core wardrobe, says Jennifer Alfano of eco-fashion blog *The Flair Index*, start with a "radical, no-waste" clean-out: Resell or donate unsentimental items you don't wear, then shop strategically, replacing fast fashion with classic, high-quality pieces. It takes "saintly patience" to find the right black pants, jeans, or sneakers, she says. They're not exciting to buy, but if they make you feel great every time you put them on, they're worth the effort.