



Fall Home Renovation Guide

Five elements that help boost efficiency in older homes

Older homes, unless they've been upgraded with energy conservation in mind, need special care, and possibly some renovations to reach high standards of energy efficiency.

There are five elements that can be coordinated to produce a high level of energy efficiency. They are controlled ventilation, good insulation,

air tight construction, some solar heating and an efficient heating system.

1. Start with the furnace. Your heating system should be checked by a qualified inspector once a year. Filters, duct work and internal burning systems all need to be in proper order to have efficient heating. You also need to insure that chimneys and vents are clear

of obstructions. To protect your family, it's a good idea to install carbon monoxide detectors.

2. Check for cracks, drafts and lack of weather stripping around doors, windows and vents. These things can result in significant heat loss, excessive moisture and discomfort. Any space that can let in air or water should be sealed by

caulking or putty. The more air tight your home is, the more energy efficient it will be.

3. Insulation in walls, ceilings, basements and other areas can have a major impact on the energy efficiency of your house as well. If it is too little, or not of high enough quality, the cold weather will seep through the walls, foundation or

roof. Upgrading of your insulation can be a do it yourself task, but if you need a major job done, you're better to hire a professional contractor.

4. If windows on the south side of your home are properly double glazed and free of obstructions from trees, awnings or blinds, they can contribute solar heating to your home.

5. Switch to a programmable thermostat to lower the temperature automatically at night and when you are not home. The goal of an energy efficient home is to minimize the no cost sources of heat. Energy conservation is more important than ever because of rising costs and environmental concerns.

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Quick bathroom makeover

A quick bathroom makeover can make even the most outdated bathroom look like new again.

Updated Flooring

One easy way to accomplish a quick bathroom makeover is to update the flooring. Linoleum can become worn and out of style. Even old tile can look dingy and old. For a quick update of your bathroom, changing carpet or linoleum is definitely easier than changing tile. However, with

professional help, removing old tile is definitely possible. After I choose my new pattern, my husband and father were able to remove the old flooring, and then we had a professional install my new linoleum.

Fresh Paint

Another quick bathroom makeover idea that most homeowners can finish in just a few days is to repaint walls, ceilings, and cabinets. Primer and paint (or even better, paint with primer) are relatively inexpensive com-

pared to most home improvement endeavours.

To spruce up the walls, ceilings, and cabinets, I choose three colors of paint that matched or complemented the colors in my new linoleum. Walls and ceilings were painted a steel blue that matched the darkest color in the pattern of the linoleum. The doors and cabinets got a brighter blue that also matched my new flooring. The cabinet doors and drawers incorporated a stencil with a complementing silver.

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