

9 Home Improvements to Promote Healthy Living in Your Home

According to the U.S. Green Building Council, pollutants are often two to five times higher indoors than outdoors and this can significantly affect air in the home causing breathing problems and respiratory diseases. When it comes to the quality of the air, several products are available on the market that homeowners should incorporate into their home such as:

- Advanced allergy filters to control dust particles and pollutants
- Dehumidification devices to manage the humidity in the home
- Variable speed air handlers to maintain the circulation of air throughout the home and ventilation fans to introduce fresh air into the home while removing stale, humid air

Improving the water quality in a home is just as important as the air quality, Lenahen said. Several products are available to improve the quality and efficiency of a home's water flow and usage, including:

- Carbon filter and reverse osmosis units to purify drinking water by removing particulate matter and harmful minerals
 - Whole-house water softeners to remove calcium and other harmful minerals while providing added benefit to the home's appliances and plumbing fixtures. Water softeners also improve skin tone and texture by removing calcium, magnesium and iron from the water.
 - Underground cisterns to collect rainwater from the gutter and downspouts to use for irrigating the lawn and landscape
- Healthy home living is also improved by the use of low Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) materials, which emit lower levels of gasses into the home from everyday materials such as paints, sealants, cabinets and flooring materials. Homeowners should use the lowest emitting VOC products for custom homebuilding and remodeling projects, thereby reducing the negative health impact the products may have on the occupants. Low VOC products will have labeling to help homeowners find the healthiest option.

Better lighting solutions can also foster healthier living. Traditional light fixtures typically include high wattage bulbs, which waste electricity while adding excessive heat into the home. Suggested improvements include:

- Decorative light fixtures with less wattage requirements and soft-light emitting globes
- Compact florescent light (CFL) bulbs or L.E.D. fixtures and bulbs for longer life usage
- Next generation skylights, such as Velux Sun Tunnel or Solatube, that bring natural light into the home, reducing the need for artificial light and energy consumption

These are just some of the many changes that can be made to current homes or built into new homes that will greatly improve the quality of life and health of its occupants. The more consumers become aware of the positive affects of healthy living within the home, the more products will enter the mainstream of standard building practices.