



Simple Tips to Turn Remodeling “Green”

“With a few simple steps, homeowners can turn a kitchen or bath renovation into a green renovation,” said NAHB Remodelers Chair Mike Nagel, CGR, CAPS, a remodeler from Chicago. “These upgrades can significantly reduce utility bills while looking great for years to come.”

KITCHEN

Refrigerators – Average life-span: 13 years.

Energy-efficient fridges only save about \$6-\$9 a year over other models you can buy because these appliances are much more efficient than they used to be. However, you can save more than \$100 a year replacing a fridge 10 years and older.

Dishwashers – Average life span: 9 years.

Energy Star®-rated models use 41 percent less energy than other dishwashers, saving up to \$90 over the product’s life. However, when replacing older dishwashers, homeowners immediately reduce their energy bills by \$30 a year.

Microwave Ovens – Average life span: 9 years

People know that microwaves can cook much faster than conventional ovens. But, they also can use up to 80 percent less energy. While microwaves are not appropriate for all cooking, using them can save time and money.

Oven/Ranges – Average life span: 13-15 years.

Gas burners use 55 percent of the energy produced compared to 65 percent for electric cooktops. Consider induction cooking, which uses 90 percent of all energy produced. When choosing ovens, convection ovens can save up to 20 percent on energy use compared to non-convection models. Additionally, self-cleaning ovens tend to have more insulation, making them more efficient as well.

Kitchen Cabinets – Average life span: 50 years.

Consider recycled or reclaimed wood when replacing cabinets. Particleboard offers another economically and environmentally friendly alternative – though it can be less durable than solid wood products.

Countertops – Average life span: lifetime of home.

Counters come in all shapes and sizes, but recycled glass and concrete have a great modern look and give these old materials a second chapter. Many of these same products also work as tiles for your kitchen.

Flooring – Average life span: 10 years to lifetime.

Carpeting only lasts up to 10 years and linoleum up to 25 years, while wood floors last a lifetime. Consider using renewable flooring like cork or bamboo. These flooring options offer easy maintenance with a long-lasting natural look for your kitchen.

“Homeowners can easily transform their bathrooms with these simple energy and water efficient upgrades,” said NAHB Remodelers Chair Mike Nagel, CGR, CAPS, a remodeler from Chicago. “Whether it’s simply swapping out a shower head or completely gutting the room, it makes a lot of sense to go green when remodeling a bathroom.”

BATHROOM

Water heater – Average life span: 10-11 years.

Heating water can account for around 15 percent of a home’s energy bill. With an energy-efficient tankless water heater, homes can save \$40-\$100 a year.

Showerhead – Average life span: lifetime of home.

A high-efficiency showerhead can save \$15 a year on your water bill, making it a smart, simple choice when remodeling your bathroom.

Toilet – Average life span: lifetime of home.

Though some items may need replacement, your typical toilet lasts practically forever. A high efficiency model can save more than \$90 a year in water use.

Ventilation Fans – Average life span: 10 years.

Home owners will save electricity by using energy-efficient exhaust fans. When remodeling your bathroom, an Energy-Star®-rated fan can save \$120 over the product’s lifespan.

Bathroom Faucets – Average life span: 20 years.

A high-efficiency water faucet may only save you about \$3 a year, but that puts an additional \$60 in your pocket over the product’s life.

