

# Common Sense Home Improvements

Contributed by Justin Lee  
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1. Cork Floors - This eco-flooring is not only economical, but practical as well. It provides good sound insulation, is much more comfortable for standing on than ceramic or slate, and has allergy resistant properties.

2. Bamboo Countertops - Also an eco-friendly alternative to standard countertops, bamboo can be harder and denser than maple. It comes in various vertical or parquet grain designs, and in a selection of colors.

3. LED Lighting - LED lighting systems use far less energy than standard bulbs. Although initially more expensive, they pay for themselves over time. Lower electric bills can be a great selling feature in any market.

4. Garage Doors - Gone are the stark white, plain, windowless doors we were so accustomed to. One of the most popular exterior features of an up-to-date home is a new garage door in one of the current designs such as a carriage style with a row of small windows.

5. Energy Star Windows - If your home needs new windows, then ensure that you choose energy star rated models. Not only will you save on heating costs, but you'll provide an extra incentive for a prospective buyer.

6. Tankless Hot Water Heater - Tankless hot water systems have become a popular, energy saving alternative to conventional hot water heaters. Their initial cost is a little higher, but they save 30-40% more in energy, are made to last 20 years or longer, and are designed to allow multiple water flows at once. This means two of the kids can be having showers at the same time the dishwasher is running.

7. Water-Saving Toilets - The demand for water-saving toilets has grown over the last couple of years and technology has improved to the point where these units use less than half the water of their older counterparts.

8. Nicely Landscaped Gardens - You can't beat good old curb appeal when selling a home. Your yard is often the first thing a buyer sees when house shopping, and the opinion they form can make or break a sale before they even set foot in your home.

9. Doorless Showers - Doorless or walk-in showers with sleek chrome trims are replacing large spa tubs by leaps and bounds. It's become a popular feature in most high-end condos and apartments.

10. Painting - A fresh coat of neutral paint on your interior walls can make a home feel like new. Paint or stain touch-ups can brighten up an otherwise worn home exterior, making it appear updated and well cared for.

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