

Warm, cozy and eco-friendly

Earth-friendly home improvements for winter

FAMILY FEATURES

SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Blustery winds raging outdoors may leave you struggling to find a balance between making sure your family stays warm and maintaining an earth-friendly home. Keeping your home cozy and honoring your sustainable sensibilities can actually go hand-in-hand.

Making green upgrades to your home can add value, too. These sustainable home improvements can go a long way toward boosting your comfort, so you have an inviting oasis to linger where you're well protected from the elements.

Carpeted Floors

The sleek, clean look of wood or tile flooring is in high demand for many homeowners. However, carpet can actually provide help with climate control that goes beyond a softer, warmer surface for your bare feet to tread. Carpet can act as an insulator and help keep a room warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer. If carpeted flooring isn't consistent with your style or budget, consider adding sub-

stantial area rugs to rooms that could use some extra warmth.

Energy-Efficient Heating Systems

An efficient option like Mitsubishi Electric's Zoned Comfort Solutions uses energy smartly by actively heating specific areas of your home where you need it. The system monitors the conditions in each room and adjusts automatically to maintain the desired temperatures. The system's ductless indoor units offer reusable, long-life, washable filters to improve your indoor air quality while minimizing impact on landfills. Plus, advanced filters on some models offer enhanced odor control to help ensure fresher air during winter months when air tends to stagnate inside due to closed windows and doors.

Ceiling Fan Adjustment

You may naturally turn off your ceiling fans when winter arrives, but the same fans that provide refreshing cool air in the summer can actually help keep your room warm, too. Simply switching

the fans to run clockwise helps draw warm air upward and distribute it throughout the home. This little circulation-boosting move can reduce your energy bill by as much as 10 percent.

Tankless Water Heaters

Make leaving the warmth of your bed each morning more appealing with the assurance of a steaming hot shower that doesn't needlessly burden the environment. Traditional water heaters run a continuous power cycle to maintain a tank full of hot water, regardless if you're using it or not. However, a tankless version heats what you need when you need it. It's important to ensure your tankless unit is sized with the proper gallons-per-minute rating to handle demand for multiple simultaneous uses, like a load of laundry and a shower at the same time.

Smart Controls

The wide range of smart-enabled home products, appliances and entertainment devices make life more convenient and enjoyable, but they can also

play a role in managing your environmental footprint. Helpful tools, like Mitsubishi Electric's kumo cloud mobile app, ensure you're not wasting energy to perform functions when you're not even home. These programs allow you to schedule your daily routines and even make adjustments remotely when your day gets off track. For example, it allows you to program and adjust your heating and cooling system from a smartphone or tablet so you won't come home to a house that's freezing cold.

Better Lighting

Winter isn't just cold; it's often dark and dreary, too. That means you're more likely to rely on energy to illuminate your home, especially since an alternative like throwing open the curtains to let in natural light can have the unintended consequence of allowing cold air to seep in. You can curb your energy reliance and the impact on your energy bills by swapping out your bulbs for light emitting diode lights, compact fluorescent lamps or energy-saving LED lights, which can reduce your energy needs by up to 80 percent.



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