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more eco-friendly

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Making your home more eco-friendly doesn't mean you have to install a wind turbine on the side of your house. There are many simple cost effective things you can easily do to your house to save money on bills, while also protecting the environment.

Our homes emit a huge amount of carbon into the atmosphere, but by insulating and updating your appliances this amount can be minimised, which is why it will save the pennies.

Nigel has suggested the following 10 tips to help you make your home more Eco-Friendly.

#### **1 Loft insulation:**

In your loft ensure you have between 150mm and 200mm of insulation. Rockwool insulation is available at most builder's merchants but there are also other sustainable alternatives.

#### **2 Cavity wall insulation:**

Some older homes tend to have a cavity between the outer and inner wall. Getting that cavity filled is a great way of reducing the amount of energy you need to heat your home and it also helps reduce drafts and cold spots in your home that can make it uncomfortable.

#### **3 Under floor insulation:**

Insulation doesn't have to stop at your loft. If you've got suspended timber floors you can fill these voids too.

#### **4 Boiler replacement:**

If your boiler is between 10 and 15 years old consider a new condensing type boiler. These days they are 98 per cent efficient — compared to 70 per cent for older boilers. This means you use less fuel, so in an age of increased fuel prices it's a no-brainer.

#### **5 Heat Exchangers:**

Fitting a new kitchen or bathroom? Well think about a heat exchanger. They're similar to extractor fans, but a heat exchanger can recover around 60 per cent of the heat going out of a building and pump it back into the house.

#### **6 Double glazing:**

Double glazing is very effective but costly. If your existing windows are beyond repair, then replace them with timber double-glazing. If the existing windows are sound but single-glazed, think about all the other energy-saving measures you can undertake first. Avoid uPVC windows or doors – they are not maintenance-free, they deteriorate under direct sunlight and the manufacturing leads to the release of highly poisonous chemicals, which threaten the environment and human health.

#### **7 Solar panels:**

Consider fitting solar thermal panels on your roof. They can provide up to 70 per cent of your annual hot water needs. There are two types of panel – flat plate collectors and evacuated tubes. We advocate using the former as, although they are slightly less efficient than the tubes, they are cheaper and less prone to damage. Preferably they should go on south facing roofs – or anywhere between

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south east and south west. Note that you will need a new hot water cylinder.

## **8 Ground source heat pumps:**

If you've got the space outside your home you should look at the possibility of a ground source heat pump, you may even find there are grants available. They don't require any external fuel and are designed to heat a whole building. They use a ground loop that is buried underground which transfers heat from the ground into a building to provide space heating and, in some cases, to pre-heat domestic hot water. For the dedicated eco-warrior only!

## **9 Wind turbines:**

A real visual statement about your eco-credentials but not top of my list because they aren't a really reliable option. Sometimes there's not enough wind, sometimes too much.

## **10 Greywater:**

This final tip's not about energy saving but water conservation. Consider recycling as much water as you can. You can use greywater — a term used for used for water used in washing, though not toilet or food waste. It can be recycled in the home to flush the loo or you could harvest rainwater for use in the home and the garden.

For more information on Architect Your Home contact visit:  
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