

5 Eco-Friendly Improvements for Your Next Renovation

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This past week, the whole world celebrated Earth Day. While we all want to reduce our environmental impact, it's often said that sustainability equals sacrifice. But there are a few additions that can make our homes work smarter, not harder. From native plants to reclaimed materials, these eco-friendly upgrades are standing ready for your next renovation. Here are five ways to reduce your carbon footprint without skimping on modern conveniences.

1. INSTALL ENERGY-EFFICIENT WINDOWS

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[Ultra Modern Villa in Marbesa](#)

More comfort, smaller carbon footprint—two things you can count on when updating single-pane windows to their energy-efficient counterparts. Whether you're renovating in a region with four seasons or an environment with tropical temperatures, bolstered panes work to optimize and regulate a home's temperature. By sealing in warm air during the winter and keeping out the heat come summer, double-pane windows lessen the need for fossil fuels, like those required for natural gas furnaces. Framing materials can also make a difference—consider the eco-friendliness of fibreglass when making your selection, as did the designers of [this ultra modern villa in Marbesa, Marbella](#).

2. USE LOCAL FLORA FOR LANDSCAPING

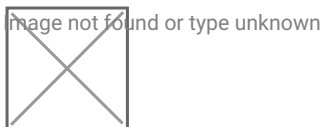


[Natural garden and sea views from contemporary apartment in Costalita](#)

When it comes to designing an eco-friendly landscape, choosing native plants is the way to go. By being naturally acclimated to a region's weather and rainfall conditions and resistant to local pests, they require minimal maintenance and less use of pollutants like insecticides and pesticides. From a design standpoint, they work to deepen the sense of place—which can feel particularly restorative in a vacation home such as this [first line beach apartment in Costalita](#), where homeowners can enjoy the beautiful gardens of the community.

3. INVEST IN SOLAR PANELS

Solar is one eco-upgrade where buyers see an immediate return on investment. As with a recently renovated kitchen, many buyers are willing to pay a premium for a solar energy system. New developments like this [Exclusive Apartments and Penthouses in Benahavis](#) rely on latest in technology and design to create eco-friendly dwellings.



[Unique promotion of exclusive apartments and penthouses offers by the latest in technology and design.](#)

In places like the Costa del Sol, which receives an average of over 300 sunny days a year, solar energy is becoming the norm. But many are surprised to learn that even areas with heavy cloud coverage receive an average of two hours of sun per day. While four hours is ideal, solar panels make it possible to live nearly off the grid even in regions with less sunny days.

4. BRING NATURAL STONE INTO THE KITCHEN



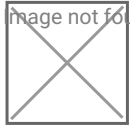
[Fully Furnished Puente Romano Duplex](#)

The kitchen is often one of the most-used rooms in the home, so it only makes sense to choose materials that are built to last. Natural stones such as marble, quartz, and granite are virtually indestructible as kitchen surfaces, making them one of the most sustainable options in the long term. Fortunately, they're also some of the most beautiful—as revealed by this unique [4 bedroom duplex penthouse in the prestigious Puente Romano](#).

5. LAY RECLAIMED WOOD FLOORING

In the age of mass production, nothing beats the authentic character and charm of reclaimed wood—just take a look at the wood flooring in [this superb sea views villa in Marbella](#). But beauty isn't the only thing upcycled wood has in its favor. Whether it was used for an ancient ship or centuries-old barn, most reclaimed wood comes from old-growth trees and is stronger, more resistant to rot, and more dense than new-growth. What's more, reclaimed wood effectively traps air, making it a natural insulator when used as flooring.

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Whether buying or selling, it's more important than ever to consider the environmental impact of a home. Thankfully, it's possible to reduce our carbon footprint without sacrificing style or comfort—all it takes is some smart strategizing and renovating to help us live a little more green.

Source: Sothebys - Images: Asset Folio / Heitor Simao