

## Green and Healthy Approach in Home Improvement & Cleaning



Nowadays Eco-conscious way of life is not just a trend but a must. We need to make changes in our modus operandi in order to improve the quality of our being. *Even the smallest steps make a significant difference.* There IS a way to introduce environmentally friendly practices even in home improvement. Here are a few useful suggestions that will make your home renovation and cleaning routine healthier and “greener”:

### Reduce the VOCs factor in Your Home

One of the most dangerous factors for indoor air quality are the Volatile Organic Compounds, aka VOCs. They are most likely to be found in paints, paint thinners, both adhesives and adhesive removers, fuels, aerosols, cosmetics and many more. *Some of the most common VOCs are formaldehyde, benzene, toluene, trichloroethylene and xylene* and are widely used in the production and installation of carpets, wooden floors, isolation and furniture. VOCs cause short and long term health conditions – respiratory problems, skin irritation, allergies, nausea. Formaldehyde and benzene are proven carcinogens.

However in the modern world you cannot avoid VOCs completely but you can at least reduce them to a minimum level. *Avoid buying products containing high VOC, always check the labels for low or even no VOCs.* Most of the synthetic carpets and carpets with synthetic backing evaporate VOCs, few days after their installation. During this time it is highly recommended to leave the windows wide opened and do not enter the room for at least 3 days.

**Another precaution against Volatile Organic Compounds when buying a carpet is to search for Green Label® or Green Label Plus® Carpet and Rug Institute Certification.**



### Matter Matters



Green care for your home starts with choosing the right materials. VOCs aren't the only dangerous factor in your upholstery, furniture and flooring. *Synthetic fibres and materials are often being produced using toxic chemicals* and they are not biodegradable. If you enjoy the soft feeling of carpets and rugs always prefer natural fibered ones. Their maintenance is not much different than the man-made materials – thorough vacuuming and seasonal care will keep them in good shape for long time.

When doing home renovation choosing hard floor, combined with natural fibered rug always is always a better option. Besides, hard flooring, especially if it is wood, sourced from sustainably grown forests is not only greener, but also healthier choice for you and your family. Hard floors are easier to clean, disinfect and maintain, they don't accumulate any dust and dirt, and don't hide risks of mildew or mold appearance, if properly installed. Having a *hard floor reduces all factors, causing allergies and respiratory problems such as dust mites, microbes and mold.* Bamboo for instance, is ideal solution due to the fact that this plant grows remarkably fast.

**!Just remember to use low to no VOCs containing adhesives and glues when installing your flooring!**

## Change Your Approach to Cleaning



There are plenty of other things you can do to make your home cleaning more environmentally friendly. Even if you're not about to change your flooring soon, you can still make a step to a positive change. *One of the many things that are easy to change is to replace all your single use tools with reusable ones.* It is cheaper to clean with them and it is small, but effective way to improve your and our Planet's health. You can get a mop, which "head" can be even machine-washed if you want your cleaning tools to be perfectly clean and don't spread germs and bacteria all over your home.

### Do not Use Paper Towels

Another small, yet very important thing you can do is to quit paper towels once and for all! Paper towels can be very handy to use, especially when you're outside. But when you are cleaning at your home, forget about them. There are two reasonable alternatives to one-use paper towels. You can buy specially made cleaning and dusting cloths. They are usually made from materials, which are machine washable and easy to clean and use many times. The second option is to save some old textile after your spring cleaning and cut them to pieces to use as a cloth. *Old t-shirts, pillowcases, sheets and curtains, cut into pieces will do great.* Cotton ones are great for wiping the dust, wool is the best material, if you want to polish your furniture! This way you'll give new life to old fabric and save both trees and your money.



### Clean with Eco-friendly Formulas

The detergents and cleaners that you use are another key issue to going green in home cleaning. Common detergents contain pretty strong formulas that are highly aggressive to the environment and to you and your family. They often cause allergies, respiratory problems, skin irritations and other conditions. Replace harsh chemicals with Eco-friendly detergents. If you want *you can made some very effective cleaners by yourself using ingredients, which are easy to find in every household* – vinegar, baking soda, salt and lemon juice. These home-made cleaners can handle some of the most hard to remove types of dirt and stains from your carpet and upholstery if you give them a chance.

### Leave Your Carpets and Clothes to Air-Dry

At last but not least – air dry your laundry (and carpets!) every time you can! Drier is one of the most energy consuming appliances along with the washing machine, refrigerator and kitchen oven. Of course, sometimes you don't have enough time to wait your clothes dry naturally. *Sometimes the weather just doesn't allow it, but drying your clothes outside in the sun will save precious energy.*



As you can see there is plenty of things you can do to improve your home maintenance. There is a simple principle, reflecting the credo of green living – the rule of the 3 R-s:

#### Reduce – Reuse – Recycle.

Following this simple rule in your cleaning routine can make a significant change to better, cleaner and healthier home and Planet.