



HOW TO:

Build with more sustainable materials







A practical guide to self-builds, extensions, and whole property renovations

Are you a trade looking to meet increasing homeowner demand for more environmentally sustainable home renovation solutions? Or simply cut down on your own carbon footprint?

We've created the following guide to help you on your way to becoming green retrofit experts.

As part of the Government's plans to bring the UK to net-zero by 2050, eventually all businesses will be required to report emissions on transportation, distribution, and waste from their operations.

This guide offers some top tips and quick fixes to help you on your way reducing your overall environmental impact.

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Day to day – Top five green changes to make

1. Recycle waste well

It may seem like an obvious place to start, but recycling waste and repurposing as many materials as possible will have a huge impact on improving your sustainability credentials. Reducing the amount of excess sent to landfill and donating unused materials instead of throwing them away can be a good place to start.

2. Switch to digital

Not only is this essential for cutting down on paper, another way of reducing your carbon footprint, but there is also an additional business advantage by digitising processes where possible. If you're able to take customer consultations via Zoom or other virtual services rather than in person, the saving you make both in time and petrol consumption will be hugely significant.

3. Order volumes

When ordering products, where possible try and order them in bulk or in larger packs to cut down on your overall carbon footprint. To further improve your impact on the environment, look for as many materials or parts as possible that you can order from local sources, to cut down on transportation.

4. Consider electric

When it comes to replacing or upgrading your van, consider making the change to an electric or hybrid vehicle. EV charging points are more readily available than ever and not only will this have a positive impact on your carbon footprint, you'll be saving on the cost of petrol too.

5. Reduce plastic

Simple but practical changes such as removing single use plastic from your day to day operations can make a huge impact on your carbon footprint. It can also double up as a cost saving initiative, investing in more durable tools or products may be more expensive in the short term but overall this will be far more cost effective than single use items.



Materials –

Top four green changes to make



1. **Glulam timber instead of steel**

For the extension and reconfiguration of interior walls, engineered timber products, such as glued-laminated timber beams, are able to do the job of steel in many designs.



2. **Reduce concrete**

An energy of the environment – a bonus of using a lightweight framing system like timber in building is the ability to reduce the amount of concrete required for foundations.



3. Natural insulation

More painters, plasterers and renderers are discovering the advantages of sprayed cork, used as an external render or thermal interior wall insulation.

Owing to the waterproof nature of the material as well as the thermal and acoustic insulation it provides.



4. Recycled and compostable materials

Re-using materials is the best option for the environment, and reclaimed wooden floorboards have been commonplace for some time.

For those homeowners looking for more modern solutions, bamboo offers great sustainability credentials compared with typical hardwood or engineered wooden flooring, as do cork and rubber, due to their renewable, fast-growing and compostable properties.



Going the extra mile

Whole-house renovation planning: Seize opportunities for additional interventions

It's much more time and cost efficient to carry out energy retrofit works in bulk, rather than undertaking smaller, disconnected projects, sporadically.

For example, if you have a client that requires a wall to be replastered after the installation of a damp-proofing course, they may be unaware that this is an ideal time to consider internal wall insulation.

As a business, you can offer a whole-house plan to help the owners review all the opportunities where environmentally friendly and energy efficiency measures could be installed. Helping homeowners to consider how best to invest their budget for the long-term.

Seemingly small actions such as those above, across many projects will also add up to help reduce your indirect carbon footprint.

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Case study – Innovative Timber Homes, Made on Skye

“R.HOUSE” is an entirely new concept in rural living, by award winning architects Rural Design. Made on the Isle of Skye. Winner of the Green Home Awards 2021, this unique design provides some great inspiration for sustainable builds.

- The layout and construction of the house kept deliberately simple in order to keep the cost of construction down. Each element of the house is chosen for its suitability, sustainability and durability
- Heating in the house is provided by an Air Source Heat Pump system which also heats the water. This along with mechanical heat recovery ventilation make the houses exceptionally economical to run
- The timber cladding is naturally durable and the vertical board on board construction lends itself to off-site construction. Available in a range of colours the simple form sits well in the landscape. The roof is durable corrugated sheeting or can be upgraded to natural slate or aluminium
- The designs can sit discreetly in-between existing buildings, unlocking opportunities for development in areas impacted by high land costs



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have a good day**



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