



*Great Ideas
Come in
Small Packages*

Remodeling to Conserve Energy

Although the United States accounts for only 5% of the world's population, we consume 25% of the earth's resources. "Green Building" is a work philosophy where healthy environments are built using recycled materials that will decrease the waste stream. By minimizing the use of petroleum-based products (nylon, polyester, oil-based paints, plastics) on a remodel, you can improve the interior air by decreasing the toxic off-gassing. The application of energy conservation principles in the selection of heating, lighting and cooling systems can result in significantly lowered utility bills.

When you're replacing windows, the best selections are windows which are double-glazed (low E glass) with a tinted glass that decreases the amount of ultraviolet light admitted to the room. Fiberglass frames for the windows are superior to wood or metal frames because they don't need painting. Also fiberglass doesn't conduct heat and will not shrink away from the glass in cold temperatures like vinyl-framed windows. Different types of glazing are required for windows with southern and western exposures in order to maximize the energy efficiency of the windows. Interior walls which receive southern or western sunlight can be built with thicker plaster to capture more heat early in the day.

If you're choosing new lighting for your home remember that fluorescent lighting is more efficient than incandescent or halogen lighting because 85-95% of those lights' energy is used to produce heat. Daylight (color-corrected) fluorescents eliminate the bluish cast to the room that is so undesirable in residential settings. In San Francisco PGE has a center where you can experiment with various light bulbs and their effects on art and colored walls. There is also a light table set up for architectural models; so the architect can adjust the window positions for a specific building site to capture more sunlight.

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