Amicus Green Building Center
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11 Quick Tips for a Green Kitchen & Bath

Like all projects, there are many opportunities and issues to maximize green in your kitchen & bath project. This introductory checklist of 11 quick tips can get you started:

1. **Think big picture.** Smart design and project thinking will bring you *many* benefits—healthier space, $$ in your pocket & healthier world. Why leave good features behind?
2. **Energy Star** appliances. Start with the one item that's on 24/7/365: the fridge. The freezer-bottom is most efficient. Also dishwasher, microwave, water heater, & other appliances. And right size them!
3. **Lighting**.
   - ☐ LEDs (light emitting diodes) are the next generation in a variety of applications—recessed, under cabinet, pendant, & track—using 80% less energy than incandescents; last up to 75,000+ hours (circa 20 years); virtually no heat; many are dimmable; and no mercury.
   - ☐ 2nd option: CFLs. Many brands are much improved over previous versions.
   - ☐ The most efficient light: **the sun.** Maximize design to strategically balance light and heat gain with windows, clerestories, solar tubes, doors, overhangs, window glazings, and other features.
4. **Finish materials** make it your space and are critical for your health and environmental safety. Choose wisely for **floors, cabinets/vanities, countertops, tiles, hardware pulls**, and other "finish" options.
   - ☐ All products should have zero formaldehyde and no/extremely low VOCs and other offgassing chemicals.
   - ☐ All woods should be either reclaimed/recycled or FSC-certified for proof of environmentally appropriate harvesting. Remember, trees give us the oxygen we breathe with, clean the air, & host ecosystems—we need to protect them.
   - ☐ Choose products made of rapidly-renewable natural fibers and/or high percentage recycled content (especially post-consumer vs. pre-consumer). Making goods with recycled ingredients cuts energy use by up to 90% vs. virgin ingredients.
   - ☐ Products should also be recyclable to close the loop of the manufacturing-disposal life-cycle. Your trash is another treasure.
   - ☐ **Cabinets** and **floors** are often major hidden sources of formaldehyde, solvents & VOC offgassing. Choose options that have ZERO formaldehyde and VOCs ***and*** are made from FSC-certified or reclaimed woods
   - ☐ **Building shelves?** Choose wheatboard (made of rapidly renewable wheat straw and non-formaldehyde adhesives) or Dakota Burl (sunflowers) instead of particleboards (made of wood chips and formaldehyde glues)
   - ☐ Choose **stains and finishes** that are healthier (even repairable) for finishing wood floors, trim, paneling, and furniture. Examples include plant oil-wax finishes, water-based AFM Safecoat polyureseal and old-fashioned pure tung oil.
   - ☐ **Tiles** made from recycled glass or metals are beautiful, less energy intensive, and durable.
5. **Water:** First, lower your water demand with efficient parts and appliances; then heat it right; and filter it to keep it clean.
   - ☐ **Low-flow showerheads** that use as little as 1.6 gallons per minute (1/3rd redux) are no-brainers—saving tons of water, money, and the energy to heat that water. The best models use air-jets to push out the water—so no sacrifice on pressure.
   - ☐ **Dual-flush toilets** save the average house 25 gallons every day. Toto's Aquia is well built, stylish & long-lasting.
   - ☐ **Energy Star dishwashers** are a must to save water, energy, and money.
   - ☐ Heat: highly efficient tanks and tankless units are key choices. **GFX recirculation** systems smartly recycle water heat.
   - ☐ **D'Mand pumps** speed delivery of hot water to your faucets/showers—no more waiting and less wasted water.
6. **Paints**: Choose those with *zero* "nasties", including VOCs, acetone, crystalline silica, ethylene glycol, ammonia, formaldehyde, and formaldehyde precursors. Don't settle for color limitations, lower scrubability, or diminished application performance. Appropriate price: $30s-40s per gallon. Natural clay plaster is also a great alternative.
7. **Adhesives and caulks**: choose options that have very low VOCs &/or are solvent-free, including caulk, general construction adhesives, drywall adhesive, floor glues, and tile adhesives.
8. **Cleaning supplies**. Use environmentally-friendly soaps and cleaners that are low on chemicals, perfumes, and surfactants (which scratch surfaces). Borax, vinegar, baking soda, and H2O are great starter ingredients.
9. **Ventilation.** Use windows and/or fans that *vent outside* to make sure the room is properly ventilated.
10. **Induction stove-tops**. Using magnets to heat pots and pans, they are highly efficient. Bonus: No heat means more safety. Also: use the toaster-oven to reheat, bake and roast smaller dishes.
11. **Food**. Organic and local foods minimize the amounts of pesticides, chemicals, petroleum, transport, pests, and other problems in our food supply and our bodies. Look for farmers markets and community supported agriculture programs (CSAs).

Have a project? Questions? Contact us to talk details.

6 Keys To Make a K/B Sustainable

- ¤ Slash electricity & gas use (and save money and prevent pollution)
- ¤ Use less water; keep it clean
- ¤ Use materials that are responsible to our environment
- ¤ Avoid unhealthy chemicals
- ¤ Keep the air clean
- ¤ You are what you eat

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SUSTAIN YOUR SPACE