

50 Ways to Green Your Home and Save \$\$\$ in Greater Vancouver

→ LOCATION

Choosing Where You Live

1 Green neighbourhoods

Buy a home in a neighbourhood close to work, transit, shopping, community centres and other services.

2 Transit-oriented density (TOD)

New, compact, complete green neighbourhoods are being built with transit as their focus. Instead of owning a car, join a car share cooperative, take transit, cycle or walk.

3 Lower Cost Luxury

If it's features such as a gym or pool you want, buy a strata unit with these amenities and share costs.

4 Score your location

Walkable neighbourhoods offer health, environmental, financial and community benefits. Enter your address or the address of a home you want to buy at www.walkscore.com. This tool calculates a walkability score based on the home's proximity to transit, grocery stores, schools and other amenities.

→ HOME IMPROVEMENT

Heating and Cooling

5 You choose, you save

[BC Hydro](#) and [FortisBC](#) offer a variety of incentive and rebate programs for home upgrades and rebates.

6 Install a high-efficiency heating system

Make sure it's [ENERGY STAR rated](#).

7 Weatherize your home

From [windows to doors](#) to insulation and [weather stripping](#). Don't forget to [seal your ducts](#).

8 Insulate your pipes

It will prevent costly heat loss. [Here's how](#).

9 Insulate your hot water heater

Buy a pre-cut jacket or blanket for \$10-\$20. You'll save up to 10% on heating costs. [Learn more](#).

10 Install a programmable thermostat

Set it lower at night and during the day when you're away. Lower the temperature. Each degree below 20°C saves you 3-5% on heating costs.

11 Replace your furnace filter

This [optimizes performance](#), as clogged filters reduce airflow, forcing your furnace to work harder.

12 Get the most from your fireplace

[Here's how to make it efficient](#).

13 Use curtains

In the daytime during summer, close to help cool your home. [Learn more](#).

14 Install ceiling fans

The energy it takes to run a fan is less than an air conditioner. In summer, make sure the fan's blades are rotating anti-clockwise for a cooling effect. In winter, the fan should be running clockwise, pushing the warm air down. [Learn more](#).

15 Use an electric fan

Skip the air conditioning.

On hot summer days, place a bowl of ice in front of a fan to cool down.

→ WATER

16 Fix leaks. Fix leaking taps

One drop per second equals 7,000 litres of water wasted per year. [Learn more](#).

17 Install a filter

Stop buying costly bottled water which adds to the landfill.

→ LIGHTING

18 Change your light bulbs

Lighting accounts for 15% of your energy bill. Replace old bulbs with [ENERGY STAR rated bulbs](#).

19 Motion detector lights

Turn lights off outside when not in use.

20 Keep it dark

Light pollution is an increasing problem. Turn off outdoor lights to save energy and encourage night life such as bats and frogs. A single bat can eat tens of thousands of mosquitoes nightly. If you have safety concerns, use motion detector lights – which come on, only as needed.

21 Holiday lights

Use [LED lights](#).

→ KITCHEN

22 Replace your fridge

An old energy guzzling fridge costs you about \$90 a year

to operate. Replace it with an ENERGY STAR fridge. BC Hydro will also not only come and pick up your old fridge free of charge, they'll [give you \\$30](#).

23 Replace your freezer

Buy an ENERGY STAR freezer and save money with lower operating costs.

→ BATHROOM

24 Low flow shower

Hot water accounts for 25% of your energy costs.

Showers can be the largest single contributor to overall hot water use in a home, accounting for 15% of total household energy use. Save with a [low-flow showerhead](#).

25 High efficiency or dual flush (you choose the amount of water used) toilets

These are now required in new homes because of [water savings](#).

→ OFFICE

26 Use smart strips

Also known as power bars, this lets you power off all equipment at the same time.

27 Buy energy smart electronics

Buy energy smart electronics and [save](#).

28 Recycle your old electronics

[Here's how](#).

→ YARD IMPROVEMENT

29 Conserve water
Fresh water comprises just 3% the world's total water supply, so conserve. Get a rain barrel and harvest water you can use in your garden. Local governments such as [Coquitlam](#) and [Richmond](#) will subsidize the cost.

30 Drip irrigation
It saves water compared to sprinklers.

31 Elbow grease
Don't power wash your driveway. Sweep it or use a scrub brush and pail.

32 Less lawn and low-maintenance lawns
Lawns waste water. Instead, conserve and beautify using [indigenous plants](#) such as ferns, tiger lilies and hostas. Or try a [low-maintenance lawn](#) that is made up of a diverse mix of hardy, drought-tolerant, slow-growing turf grasses, that require less mowing, fertilizing and watering than conventional lawn species.

33 Grow your own
How much more will you spend on food this year? Even a few miniature fruit trees and a small vegetable garden in a raised bed or in containers on your deck will help keep you healthy and save you dollars. Lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, cucumbers, strawberries and blueberries thrive in our climate. [Learn more.](#)

34 Preserve your produce
Invest in home canning jars and equipment and a small freezer and enjoy your produce year round – at considerable savings. [Here's how.](#)

35 Bee friendly
We need [bees to pollinate](#), so plant a few bee-friendly annuals such as asters, marigolds, sunflowers, zinnias; or perennials such as clematis, foxgloves, hollyhocks, roses or shrubs such as Buddleia. Consider becoming an [urban bee keeper](#), some municipalities like [Vancouver](#) allow bee keeping in your backyard.

36 Go chemical-free
“Get rid of weeds without using chemicals that harm us and our pets,” advises REALTOR® and Richmond City counselor, Derek Dang, who led the way to a bylaw banning cosmetic pesticides. His suggestion, “Use dish detergent or weed by hand.”

37 Plant fruit trees
They'll give you shade and fruit. [Growing guide.](#)

38 Compost
It will [make your garden grow](#) and divert waste from the landfill.

→ GREEN AND CLEAN

39 Clean green
Vinegar, baking soda and lemons clean as well as expensive, chemical-filled cleaning supplies for a fraction of the cost.

40 Green Laundry detergent
Use phosphate-free, biodegradable detergent.

41 Upgrade your washing machine
Replace your old washing machine with an ENERGY STAR washer that gets clothes clean using cold water. Wait until you have a full load instead of

washing clothes as you need them. Clean the lint trap of your dryer after every use.

42 Install a clothesline
Dryers use a [large amount of energy](#).

43 Get a rack
If your neighbourhood or strata prohibits clotheslines, buy a small drying rack.

→ LIVING GREEN

44 Recycle
Recycling keeps materials that can be recovered (paper, glass, metals, plastics, food etc) out of the landfills; and in the case of organics like paper, food, yard waste, it significantly reduces greenhouse gases from landfills. [Learn more.](#)

45 Buy local
[Buy local, organic and fair trade food.](#) Your food doesn't travel long distances, you support local farmers and the local economy and you consume less pesticides.

46 Don't use paper or plastic
Use cloth bags when you shop or reuse your plastic bags.

47 Backyard chickens and bees
Become involved in your own food production, raise [chickens](#) for their eggs or [bees](#) for their honey in your backyard.

→ FINANCING

48 Borrow green
Most financial institutions offer “green” mortgages, including:

- [BMO Eco Smart Mortgage](#)

offers home buyers preferred interest rates on qualifying green properties.

- [RBC Energy Saver™ Mortgage](#) gives home buyers a \$300 rebate for a home energy audit and preferred interest rates.
- Vancity offers a [Bright Ideas Home Renovation Loan](#) at prime +1% to home buyers and owners making green renovations.
- CMHC offers a [10% Mortgage Loan Premium refund](#) and possible extended amortization for buyers purchasing an energy-efficient mortgage or making energy saving renovations.

49 Loan program
[Pay-as-you-Save \(PAYS\)](#) loan program will help home owners and businesses finance energy efficiency improvements through a loan from BC Hydro or FortisBC. Pilot programs starting in November 2012 in certain BC locations.

→ RESOURCES

50 Green Tool Kit
BC Real Estate Association's [Green Tool Kit](#) provides information, references and links. It also provides comprehensive information on rebates and incentives.



Source: Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver