

American Lung Association: www.healthhouse.org
Information on building and maintaining a healthy house

Easy Green Living by Renée Loux: Guide to natural cleaning and healthy home products

Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov/iaq/
Information on indoor air quality

Natural Home: www.naturalhomemagazine.com
Print and on-line magazine about healthy, eco-friendly homes and lifestyles

Interior Design

by Greener Lives, LLC

Greener Lives, LLC is a full-service interior design firm that specializes in healthy, eco-friendly homes and lifestyles. We fulfill our client's individual design needs by specifying healthy, eco-friendly materials and furnishings, promoting energy efficiency and designing beautiful, livable interiors.

Pamela Portwood, Allied Member ASID, is the firm's founder and interior design principal. Her column "Green Interiors" is published monthly in the *Tucson Green Times* and reprinted on Greener Lives' website: www.greenerlives.net.



For more information on creating a healthy, eco-friendly home, please contact:



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Healthier Living in A Greener Home

From



GREENER LIVES LLC

Interior Design for Healthy,
Eco-Friendly Homes and Lifestyles

WHAT IS INDOOR AIR QUALITY *and Why Does It Matter?*

Americans spend up to 90% of their time indoors, yet the air inside American buildings is two to five times more polluted than the outside air, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Cleaning products, tobacco smoke, paint, furniture, draperies, floor coverings, adhesives and fireplace smoke are only some of the items that emit small particles and volatile organic compounds that contribute to poor indoor air quality. Biological pollutants, such as mold, pollen, dust mites and animal dander, also compromise indoor air quality (IAQ).

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs), some of the worst indoor pollutants, are carbon-based chemicals that evaporate easily into the air. You can recognize some of them by that "new furniture" or "new paint" smell. VOCs can cause respiratory problems, and some, like formaldehyde, are probable carcinogens.

According to the American Lung Association, poor indoor air quality can cause or contribute to the development of chronic respiratory diseases, including asthma. Poor IAQ also can cause dry eyes, nasal congestion, headaches, fatigue and nausea.

IMPROVING YOUR HOME'S IAQ

Good indoor air quality is an essential element for a healthy home. "Ten Steps To a Healthier Home" is a beginning guide to creating a healthier living space for you and your family.

Since volatile organic compounds are the major components of smog, reducing VOCs and other pollutants in your home also will contribute to a better, healthier world.

10 STEPS

TO A HEALTHIER HOME

- 1** Leave your shoes at the front door to stop tracking pollen, pesticides and dirt inside
 - At a minimum, keep your shoes outside your sleeping area
- 2** Smoke outside, even if you live alone
- 3** Use natural cleaning products to reduce household toxins and VOCs
- 4** Open your windows regularly – ideally for 10 minutes daily – to ventilate rooms, unless your home has an air exchange system
 - Keep your windows closed during peak allergy season if you have seasonal allergies
- 5** Use the vented fan in the bathroom to reduce moisture and prevent mold growth
- 6** Wash bedding weekly in hot water (130 degrees) to kill dust mites
 - The droppings of dust mites (microscopic insects that live in mattresses and bedding) can trigger asthma in children and allergies in adults
 - Choose organic-cotton sheets to avoid insecticides and pesticides from standard cotton and formaldehyde from no-iron finishes
- 7** Add allergen-impermeable, organic-cotton covers to your mattress and pillows to reduce dust mites
 - Ideally, switch to a latex mattress that naturally repels dust mites and select one that does not require a chemical fire retardant
- 8** Switch to high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) appliances
 - Use a HEPA vacuum cleaner for efficient cleaning
 - Use a HEPA air filter in your bedroom and in other rooms if you have respiratory problems
- 9** Set up your nursery with a natural crib mattress and use the home improvement guidelines below
- 10** Reduce VOCs when you make home improvements by:
 - Using VOC-free paints
 - Installing VOC-free flooring with low-VOC adhesive
 - Using furniture and cabinets made with water-based glues and varnishes and with urea formaldehyde-free particleboard and pressed board
 - Using antiques or used furniture, which have reduced VOCs

