3 Healthy Home Projects to Improve Indoor Environmental Quality

(BPT) - How healthy is your house? After spending more time at home due to quarantine and social distancing, many homeowners are asking themselves this question.

This has inspired an increase in home improvements that go beyond aesthetic enhancements. Homeowners want eco-friendly upgrades that improve indoor environmental quality (IEQ), which means improvements that support the health and wellness of the people who live in the home.

If you're curious how to improve your home's IEQ, here are three key projects to consider:

1. Hydronic radiant heating systems

Conventional forced-air systems push heated air through ductwork in the walls and ceilings. There are many drawbacks to this type of system. First, they are inefficient because hot air blows out vents and rises rather than staying lower to keep people comfortable. Second, it circulates dust, allergens and pollutants that lower the indoor air quality. Third, they can be noisy, turning on and off all day.

For a healthier home, consider hydronic radiant heating. This technology works by warming water at a heat source and circulating it through piping made of a special polymer called PEX that is installed beneath the floor.

A hydronic radiant system can dramatically improve a home's IEQ. There is no fan to circulate dust, pollen and odors, so you can breathe easier. Because it's in the floor, it keeps the heat low - where you and your family actually live - without hot and cold spots. You can easily heat in zones to save money, plus, because the system is near-silent, you'll enjoy a more peaceful home. Check your local listing for a heating contractor near you.

2. Natural light and daylighting

Natural light increases the comfort of a home and can have a positive psychological impact on the people who spend time there. That's why, when choosing home-improvement projects, use daylighting strategies to improve IEQ.

Daylighting is a method you can use to welcome more natural light into your home. There are many improvements that support daylighting. Adding windows strategically to brighten spaces throughout the day is a smart first step. Adding skylights to bring in light where traditional windows are not possible or logical, such as in a bathroom.

Daylighting can be controlled for comfort and privacy with shades, blinds and plants. In spaces where windows and skylights are not possible, adding reflective surfaces to the room design can provide internal lighting by maximizing the sunlight. For example, glossy tile or mirrors throughout a room can help brighten the space and align with daylighting goals.

3. Clean air and proper ventilation

Airflow is an important part of any healthy home, helping to remove contaminants and bring in fresh air. Proper ventilation prevents mold and mildew growth, removes common pollutants from appliances and other household items, improves indoor air quality and boosts IEQ.

To improve your home's ventilation, always open windows and skylights when weather and conditions allow to let in fresh air. Remember to turn on ventilation fans when bathing or showering to remove excess humidity. In addition, use fans in the kitchen to remove smoke and heat while cooking. Finally, maintain filters on items such as air purifiers, humidifiers and your HVAC system.