

# Simple Steps for an Eco Chic INTERIOR

Sustainable design doesn't have to mean recycled glass and straw-baled walls; Holly Booker gives us another take on living green.



*Reupholstering old furniture is a quick and easy way to update your interior look. Experiment with patterned fabrics in bold designs. An old shipping pallet can be turned into an industrial style coffee table with castors screwed to the bottom to move it around.*



SPRING IS A REFRESHING SEASON, WHEN WE SHAKE OFF THE shackles of winter, and embrace the fresh, invigorating energy that only spring can bring. Making a few small changes to your home interior, while being green savvy, can have an uplifting effect on you and your family, and doesn't have to cost the earth.

Sustainable interior design is about creating homes imbued with warmth and character. Take inspiration from the steps outlined below this season, to breathe a refreshing change through your home.

## REDUCE

A minimalist look can create a sleek space that is easy on the eye, so de-cluttering your home of items that you no longer have a purpose for, and create functional living areas and a relaxing environment to live in. Rid yourself of excess furniture and nick-nacks which are gathering dust.

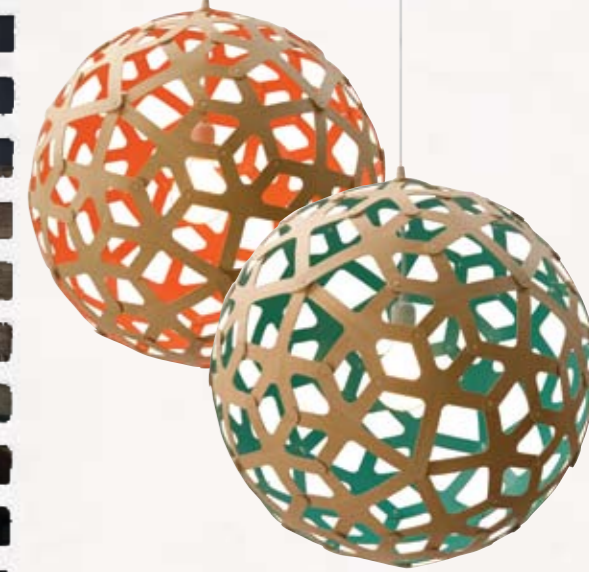
*"Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful."*

- William Morris

Be mindful of our already congested landfills when de-cluttering, and reduce sustainably using Trademe, [www.freecycle.co.nz](http://www.freecycle.co.nz), donating to the Salvation Army, and simply passing things on to friends.

Reducing is not only about culling items, it is about making conscious choices around how we spend our money. Making the right choice at purchase time can benefit not only you as the consumer, but the producer and the environment.

Investing in good design will reduce replacement purchases! Think about buying local produce and design. Or if you can't find what you need from a local designer try those that support Fair Trade practices to ensure that your purchase has a positive impact on the lives of others. The Urban Living Guide from Victoria University's Environment Group remind us all that "Fair Trade is more than hand made rugs and beaded jewelry," so shop around to ensure you are making the right choice.



**ABOVE** The coral kitset hanging lamp from David Trubridge is made from bamboo plywood and is now available in 6 new colours including flamingo and niagara, as seen here. **LEFT** Update your walls with paints which have been created with the environment in mind, such as BioPaints Midnight Dip which makes a modern statement in this living area.



Local designers have made sustainability part of their everyday practice utilising materials and processes that are good for not only the environment but you, the end user as well.

**ABOVE** Alto console table designed and manufactured in Christchurch, available from Dawson Furniture. Cushions, Peacock Party printed on flax linen and Fretwork printed on hemp/organic cotton. Both handprinted fabrics from Australian company Thea & Sami, available from [www.boltofcloth.com](http://www.boltofcloth.com)



*It is really important to me that all our things have a story. In turn this combines all eras of furniture and art. My grandmothers hair, combined with a antique oak bentwood cover and a Workroom design angle lamp. Being ecologically minded is all about considered purchasing, and collating things which you love, and will always love.*

- Rebecca Snelling, Workroom Design



**ABOVE** Workroom design pieces have sustainability in mind with a timeless aesthetic and use found timber where ever possible. All their designs are made in low quantities, such as their wooden angle table lamp 2.0 made from recycled oak timber and powder coated spun metal. Available in a selection of colours and made in batches of ten. **LEFT** Inspired by nature in the urban environment, this sapling patterned wallpaper from UK base MissPrint is printed with organic pigment inks and available from [www.paperroom.co.nz](http://www.paperroom.co.nz)

## REUSE

To invigorate a living space, reuse older furniture by giving it a makeover. "Updating your living space sustainably by blending older pieces with contemporary furniture is hot in the interior design world at present," says Toni Brandso of Material Creative.

Transform old metal chairs by getting them powder-coated, or reuse old wooden furniture by sanding timber back and applying a natural oil finish. Up-cycle vintage fabrics or source organic materials to replace worn out coverings on chairs, couches or pillows for a fresh and stylish lift. Reuse fabrics, such as classic kiwi swandri or tartan picnic rugs, which can be found in most op-shops.

Brandso adds, "While scouring the demo yards and second hand stores keep your eye out for pieces that you can reuse for storage and display. Try old jars, or alchemy bottles for vases."

There is a whole world of inspiration on the net and so many quirky ideas that can transform your home.



**ABOVE** Add a sense of eco elegance to your interior with these Hemptech 100% linen fabrics in a range of natural base colours which are printed with a light wash in either gold or silver. **RIGHT** A hanging lightshade in Bird Textiles Man On The Lake fabric. Bird Textiles were Australia's first climate neutral business and all their fabrics are hand printed using water based dyes on organic cotton. Available from [www.boltofcloth.com](http://www.boltofcloth.com)

*"At CleverBastards we believe sustainable living means much more than just buying and consuming goods with good eco-creds. It's about good design; design that's meaningful, has a story behind it, and by a real person. Good design is not only aesthetically innovative and functionally beautiful, it has inherent value. Something to leave to the next generation. And that's good, clever investment."*

- Paul Kayser, Clever Bastards



**ABOVE** Dawson's Furniture specialise in New Zealand made furniture ensuring quality workmanship and timeless design from local manufacturers. This also allows for custom made pieces to suit your home such as the Dom Buffet. **BELOW** With the current interest in upcycling, many designers are taking on the aesthetic for new product ranges. For example Danish company House Doctor, with pieces like their Mix Sidetable. Find them locally via [www.nelsonandco.co.nz](http://www.nelsonandco.co.nz)

## Our Picks For Sustainable Interior Products Online:

- [www.biopaints.co.nz](http://www.biopaints.co.nz)
- [www.boltofcloth.com](http://www.boltofcloth.com)
- [www.cleverbastards.co.nz](http://www.cleverbastards.co.nz)
- [www.dawsonsfurniture.co.nz](http://www.dawsonsfurniture.co.nz)
- [www.endemicworld.com](http://www.endemicworld.com)
- [www.goodyarn.co.nz](http://www.goodyarn.co.nz)
- [www.hemptech.co.nz](http://www.hemptech.co.nz)
- [www.okooko.com](http://www.okooko.com)
- [www.porterspains.com.au](http://www.porterspains.com.au)
- [www.vidatextiles.co.nz](http://www.vidatextiles.co.nz)
- [www.workroom.net.nz](http://www.workroom.net.nz)



## REFRESH

Refreshing an interior is a simple and affordable way to update your home. Paint can completely overhaul a space in a day, making a noticeable transformation of an otherwise tired area. A freshened living area can lift the mood of a home and update your look at a small cost. There are a large variety of paints on the market which contain low VOC's, which reduce environmental impacts and air pollution, such as Dulux Professional EnvirO2 and Resene EcoSense.

Wallpapers have made a comeback and are a fun way of introducing bold colours and textures to a neutral foundation. Be brave, think Kelly Wearstler. Wallpaper one wall in your living space to instantly create depth, and then layer layer layer. Be sure to balance the colours and textures in the room around a central colour theme, to welcome the change.

Soft furnishings such as curtains, rugs and cushions add texture, style and atmosphere to your home and can instantly revive a room. Light colours soften a room, with staples such as white, grey, and tan being easy to match, while creating a great foundation to build upon. Using organic cottons, linens or even hemp to make drapes and refurbish tired pillows and chairs, is a sensible eco choice. Instead of throwing your old curtains away, gift them to the Salvation Army or other such charity stores.

Holly Jean Brooker is a director of Urbanmac Ltd an online company helping urbanites take responsibility to preserve the environment while maintaining their busy city lifestyles. [www.urbanmac.co.nz](http://www.urbanmac.co.nz)