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Five ways of creating a healthy, sustainable and comfortable home

Most buildings are renovated for functional and energy reasons, but there are other equally important advantages to focus on in a renovation or building project – such as health, well-being and comfort. The VELUX Group asked 19 leading international experts what they see as being the most important to bear in mind when renovating or building the perfect house.

In 2013, the VELUX Group gathered together 19 of the world's leading experts in architecture, civil engineering and medicine for five workshops to discuss and formulate guidelines on how to make a healthy home. This is a selection of some of the most important tips the group agreed on.

Correctly-positioned windows make the most of fresh air

No one can live without fresh air – and the same goes for your house. More often than not, we cannot sense pollutants in indoor air, but they will affect our health and well-being. This is why our houses should offer protection from the hidden pollutants we discharge when we cook, or that are given off from building materials and furniture. By positioning your windows correctly, you can enjoy the benefits of natural ventilation that will rapidly improve the indoor air quality in your home.

The right amount of daylight at the right time

Waking up to natural morning light, plenty of daylight throughout the day, and darkness at night are crucial to our health and comfort. Light and darkness are key elements in keeping our internal body clock and circadian rhythm synchronised. So investing in appropriate measures at home to provide daylight and darkness, such as windows and blinds, can pay big dividends.

Bring nature inside

Living in close contact with nature improves your mood, creates better health and reduces stress, which is why we need to bring nature inside our houses. When building a house, it is worth considering having at least one outdoor or semi-outdoor space – such as a garden, terrace or balcony. Another option is to make sure that the house provides you with a generous view of the sky and ground; this brings nature inside too.

Rid your home of stressful noise

Apart from being a source of irritation, unwanted sounds, like loud traffic, can cause stress and have a direct negative impact on our well-being. External noise from rowdy neighbours, and internal noise from heating/cooling or ventilation systems, should therefore be kept to a minimum. And even lower noise levels are needed at night.

Take control of indoor temperatures

One of the factors most crucial to our indoor comfort is avoiding unpleasant indoor temperatures. We spend 90% of our time indoors, so make sure that temperatures indoors follow the same rhythm as those outdoors, which rise during the day and fall at night. Because our bodies are designed to follow the rhythms outdoors, this will automatically achieve what we feel is the most comfortable indoor temperature.

Beyond the research

These simple tips are the result of the discussions and conclusions of several workshops on indoor environment, historical perspectives on buildings, light and circadian rhythms. The full Circadian House report offers even more advice on how to create a healthy and comfortable home.

To view the report, go to <http://thedaylightsite.com/library-3/research-publications/papers/#sub-9892>

The experts behind the report:

- Anna Wirz-Justice, University of Basel, Switzerland
- Anne Helene Garde, National Research Center for the Working Environment, Denmark
- Atze Boerstra, BBA Binnenmilieu, The Netherlands
- Dean Hawkes, University of Cambridge, UK
- Francis Allard, University of La Rochelle, France
- Hal Levin, Building Ecology, US
- Jelle Laverge, University of Ghent, Belgium
- Koen Steemers, University of Cambridge, UK
- Luc Schlangen, Phillips Lighting, The Netherlands
- Mariëlle Aarts, Eindhoven University of Technology, The Netherlands
- Nick Baker, University of Cambridge, UK
- Ole Bouman, Shenzhen Biennale, China
- Pawel Wargocki, Technical University of Denmark
- Per Olaf Fjeld, University of Oslo, Norway
- Richard Hobday, Independent researcher, UK
- Russell Foster, University of Oxford, UK
- Staffan Hygge, University of Gävle, Sweden
- Thomas Witterseh, Danish Technological Institute, Denmark
- Truus de Bruin, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

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For more than 70 years, the VELUX Group has created better living environments for people around the world. Making the most of daylight and fresh air through the roof. Our product

programme includes roof windows and modular skylights as well as a range of decoration and sun screenings, roller shutters, installation solutions and intelligent home controls. These products help to ensure a healthy and sustainable indoor climate. For work and learning. For play and pleasure. We work globally – with sales and manufacturing operations in more than 40 countries and around 10,000 employees worldwide. The VELUX Group is owned by VKR Holding A/S, a limited company wholly owned by foundations and family.

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Contact

Kathrine Westermann
Media Relations Manager
The VELUX Group
Mobile: +45 23 81 55 95
E-mail: Kathrine.westermann@velux.com