
12 Tips for a Better Quality Renovation

- 01** Plan it right. Before you start, think about how each element - roof, walls, windows and floor - link up to create one cosy continuous unbroken warm coat for your house. How will the wall insulation connect seamlessly to the roof insulation? Remember if you went out on a cold day with a warm jacket but no trousers you wouldn't feel very comfortable either. (Not to mention the funny looks!)
- 02** Get your wall insulation right the first time. Don't skimp. You might want to consider external insulation rather than internal insulation. This means you don't need to redecorate internally and is also better at ensuring that there are no gaps in insulation where the internal walls meets the external wall.
- 03** When insulating your attic remember you need to maintain or improve the ventilation to your roof timbers. You don't want to be replacing your roof because of rot caused by moisture because of blocked ventilation.
- 04** The insulation in roof, walls and floors needs to connect. Even small gaps or spaces between insulation seriously affect its performance and you don't want to have wasted your money.
- 05** If you are insulating internally you need a properly designed vapour barrier inside the insulation to stop warm, moisture laden internal air infiltrating into the walls, condensing and causing mould inside your walls.
- 06** If replacing windows buy the best windows. Triple glazed windows are not much more expensive than double glazed. You will notice how much more comfortable it is to sit beside these as even in the coldest weather the inside surface of the glass stays warm.
- 07** Make sure that your windows are properly sealed to walls with proper airtightness tapes. Don't let the installer tell you that squirting foam between the window frame and the wall will make them airtight. It won't. Not much point putting in great windows if cold draughts are coming in all around the perimeter of the window.
- 08** If replacing windows at the same time as installing external wall insulation, make sure the windows are moved out to be in line with the insulation.
- 09** Consider increasing the level of daylight in your house. This will increase your sense of wellbeing. Roof lights are relatively easy to install and can make a great difference to your house.
- 10** If you've followed tips 1-8 your house is now nearly draught free, so you must be certain that you are getting adequate ventilation. Consider a proper ventilation system rather than those draughty hit-and-miss vents in your wall. A proper system will guarantee good indoor air quality, extracting excess humidity and keeping air fresh and dry, making sure that you don't get mould growth in the house that can affect your families' health.
- 11** Now that you have done all this work, you can now fit a new energy efficient boiler. This can be much smaller than you would have needed before you insulated and changed windows, as you now need a lot less heat output. Make sure that your plumber is sizing the boiler right, as an oversized boiler in an energy efficient house will operate inefficiently. Plumbers have a tendency to oversize so that they don't get called back.
- 12** If you don't want to plan this work on your own, or if you have questions about how to do it or what approach to take, you may want to consider getting independent professional advice, especially if you are undertaking major work.

Most importantly, your tradesmen must understand all of this too! Ask for examples of work, and make sure insulation contractors are on the SEAI installers list. Also check for evidence of upskilling in energy efficiency. Courses such as the Passive House tradesman training or completion of the European-funded QualiBuild Foundation Energy Skills training are examples.