

# Henley Standard homes weekly

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Your No.1 guide for property in and around South Oxfordshire

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To left: number 17 Ravenscroft Road, Henley, has been built by the owners of number 16 next door. It is designed to be as healthy a house to live in as possible

## Why not try renting a house that's actually good for you?



Green and pleasant: above and right, bi-fold doors open on to a garden patio. Left, the bathroom



We've all heard of a house that's good for the soul, but what about a house that's good for the heart? The lungs? The whole body? LUCY BOON investigated, and found a house in Henley that's good for everything and everyone

HIDDEN dangers are said to be everywhere in our modern age — or at least that's what the papers tell us. But they're usually talking about the dangers of self-driving lorries or online trolling.

Not a lot has been said on the amount of "unnatural" components we are touching, inhaling, eating, in our very own homes.

Indeed, although much progress has been made in improving outdoor air quality over the years, no one seems to be talking about indoor air quality.

And yet as the building industry makes homes more airtight to improve energy efficiency, worries are increasing about the amount of harmful chemicals and pollutants that are accumulating right under our very noses.

Chemicals and toxins come in all shapes and forms — not just the usual suspects of cleaning products and plug-in artificial air fresheners.

Materials used in insulation, flooring and pressed wood products pose a danger to health, as do those found in most furniture and technology.

The worst culprits are found in most wet finishes — paints, glues, etc. Those that contain VOCs (volatile organic compounds) are known by scientists to have an adverse effect on

## Three ways to improve health of your home...

IF this week's lead story gives you cause for concern, here are three quick fixes to improve the health of your home environment, writes Lucy Boon.

### 1. Get some houseplants

It's pretty easy to improve indoor air quality with the addition of plain old houseplants.

According to a study by US professor Vadoud Niri and his team at the State University of New York at Oswego, houseplants are a good way to absorb volatile chemical compounds in the air.

For instance, the crassula family of plants (money or jade plant) is especially good at absorbing toluene — emitted by heating oil, paints and lacquers.

The study also showed the common spider plant absorbs more than 90 per cent of o-Xylene, found in plastic and rubber products.

### 2. Open a window

Clare Sherriff (see lead story) advises us to open our windows whenever we can.

She says: "Studies have shown that naturally ventilated buildings are better for us than air-conditioned ones. Likewise, hang your dry-cleaning outside to air for a few hours before bringing it into the house, and make your home



Give peace a chance: a lily is better for you than a mobile

a shoes-off zone to limit the amount of chemical compounds you bring to your indoor environment."

### 3. Charge your electricals downstairs

Electromagnetic fields from technology are said to interfere with the function of cells in your body, so it's best to try to limit them near you.

Clare advises to not sleep close to fuse boxes and to charge your mobile phones downstairs, rather than by your bedside.

According to Professor Vadoud Niri at the State University of New York at Oswego, putting a peace lily (spathiphyllum wallisii) on your bedside table could really help, too, as the plant was found to absorb electromagnetic radiation emitted by computers.

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A spacious 2 bedroom unfurnished apartment with parking within walking distance to the station. EER E

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