

# COOLING TIPS TO BEAT THE HEAT

Keep your cool when the days get hot. Put these ideas for summer savings—including many no-cost and low-cost tips—to work to make your home more comfortable and save energy, too.



*Homeowner Bob Jenks weatherized his older Portland home with help from Energy Trust of Oregon incentives made available through Enhabit (formerly Clean Energy Works Oregon).*

*Adding insulation and eliminating air leaks made his home much more comfortable. Bob is pleased that his newly cool home is “livable on even the hottest days, without having to turn on air conditioning.”*

*On a hot summer day, Bob wrote: “The temperature outside just hit 100 degrees, while the inside temperature is 83 on both floors. This is an amazing difference from previous years, where downstairs might be a few degrees cooler than outside and the upstairs would be unbearable.”*

## Power down to cool off

Home appliances, electronics and standard light bulbs create heat when they're on. The less you use them on a hot day, the cooler you'll be.

- Skip the oven and use the microwave, cook on the stovetop or grill outside.
- Wait until you have a full load to run your clothes washer and dishwasher, and run them in the evening when it's cooler. Let dishes air dry, wash clothes in cold water and hang them outside to dry if you can.
- Take short, cool showers and avoid hot baths.
- Unplug computers and other electronics when they're not in use.

## Use your windows strategically

Windows allow heat into your home when they're open or uncovered during the day. Open, close and cover them strategically to stay as cool as possible.

- During the day, close your windows and close the blinds, shades or curtains to keep heat outside. Light-colored window coverings help reflect heat away.
- When temperatures drop, open your windows and doors to draw in cooler air at night or early in the morning.
- Consider adding a low-emission film to the panes to reduce heat entering your home.
- Shield windows from the outside with blinds, awnings or shutters and plant trees or tall shrubs to filter sunlight before it enters your house.

## Join the fan club

Fans keep air moving and help you feel cooler, even if you have air conditioning. They create a breeze that pulls perspiration away from your body.

- Use a portable fan or ceiling fan. Remember to turn them off when you leave the room to conserve energy. Fans cool you, not the room. If you have a ceiling fan, make sure it is set to blow air downward.
- If you use air conditioning, a fan can allow you to raise the thermostat setting by a few degrees and still stay comfortable.
- When it's cool outside, use fans in windows to pull cool air in and draw warm air out. A box fan or window-mounted fan on the north side or shady side of your house can draw in cool air. A second fan on the opposite side of the house can blow hot air out.
- If you're buying a ceiling fan, choose an ENERGY STAR® qualified ceiling fan/light combination unit, which is about 60 percent more energy efficient than conventional fan/light units.
- Run cooktop and bathroom fans when you're cooking or bathing to vent heat and moisture.

### Keep hot air out and cool air in

Sealing air leaks and insulating your home can reduce cooling and heating costs and make your home more comfortable.

- Add caulk or weatherstripping around drafty doors and windows.
- Look for holes or cracks hidden in attics, basements and crawlspaces and seal them with caulk, spray foam or weatherstripping.
- Add insulation, but seal air leaks first. Leaks make insulation less effective.

### Make the most of air conditioning

If you have air conditioning or a heat pump, use the equipment wisely and maintain it to control electricity costs and conserve energy.

- Set the air conditioning or heat pump thermostat a few degrees higher than normal when no one is home.
- Check the system air filter regularly and change it when it looks dirty. A dirty filter makes the system work less efficiently and reduces air flow.
- Have your cooling equipment serviced each year to keep it running efficiently.
- Place electronics and appliances away from the thermostat. The heat they produce can cause the air conditioner to work harder than necessary.
- To keep air flowing freely, vacuum registers regularly and avoid blocking them with furniture and other objects.

- If you have a forced air heating and cooling system, check ductwork for leaks, holes, and broken or damaged connections and repair any problems. These problems can cause as much as 20 percent of conditioned air to be lost.
- Seal ductwork with mastic sealant or metal tape (not duct tape), and insulate ducts in unconditioned spaces such as attics, crawlspaces, unfinished basements and garages.
- Make sure all vents and registers are well sealed where they meet floors, walls and ceilings.

### Vent the attic

Even in well-insulated homes, attics can reach very high temperatures and make your home warmer.

- Make sure your attic is well ventilated. Adequate vents, positioned low and high, allow hot air to escape, which keeps your home cooler and reduces the need for air conditioning.
- Keep soffit vents clear. Air flows in from soffit vents along the edge of the roof and travels up and out ridge vents and/or gable wall vents.
- If you don't have air conditioning, consider an attic fan to provide powered ventilation. Solar-powered models won't add to your electricity bill.



For more energy-saving solutions, visit [www.energytrust.org/homes](http://www.energytrust.org/homes) or call **1.866.368.7878**.