



Keep Your Home Cool Everyday Low-Cost Strategies



Living Areas

Shade south and west windows to keep out the solar heat.	Stop the sun's warmth before it gets into your home by closing inside blinds and curtains during the day; light colors will reflect the most heat.
Keep the doors and windows closed during the day.	But on cool, low-humidity nights, open the windows and use natural ventilation (with or without fans) to cool your home.
Keep interior lights dimmed or turned off during daylight hours.	Turning on a table lamp for reading in a darkened room is a better choice than letting the sun stream in through a south or west window. On the other hand, north or east windows could provide enough light without significantly adding to the heat gain in an individual room.
Check your family's lighting use.	Light fixtures generate heat and can add significantly to cooling costs. Turn off lights that really don't need to be on. A compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) produces the same light (and less heat) using 65% - 75% less energy than a regular bulb.
Minimize your appliances (TV) & computer's power consumption when you're not using it.	Shut down your computer & other appliances if you're not going to be using them for several hours. If you're just going to be away for a few minutes, turn off the monitor—it still uses considerable power in the "screen-saver" mode—and put the hard drive in your CPU to sleep.

Kitchen

Cover pots and pans on the cooktop or stove.	Cooking creates lots of heat and humidity, so contain it as much as possible.
Use an exhaust fan.	Vent steam and heat from cooking to the outdoors.
Run your dishwasher late at night.	Start the dishwasher when you go to bed. If it has a timer, set the dishwasher to run during nonpeak hours in the middle of the night.
Use the most energy-efficient appliances for cooking.	Instead of using your stove or oven, use your microwave oven or a countertop appliance such as a toaster oven, crock-pot, steamer, or pressure cooker.
Check the temperatures in the refrigerator and freezer.	The temperatures should run 38° - 40° F in the refrigerator and 0° - 5° F in the freezer. Setting colder temperature levels wastes energy and makes these heat-producing appliances run too often. Fill unused space with containers of water to reduce cycling.

Sponsored by Litchfield Energy Task Force & The White Memorial Conservation Center, Inc., Litchfield, CT
Source: *Home Heating and Cooling, Home Series 2*. Iowa Energy Center, Ames, Iowa.

Bathroom

Use an exhaust fan.	Reduce humidity by running an exhaust fan while you're in the shower. However, don't let it run too long, or it will pull cooled air out of your entire house.
Take shorter baths and showers.	Long baths and steamy showers add a lot of humidity to your home and can increase the time your air conditioner runs to overcome it. Install a water-saving showerhead too.

Laundry

Vent your dryer outdoors.	Check the lint trap, ducting, & exterior vent frequently, to make sure they're clear. Excessive lint buildup can make your dryer run longer.
Dry clothes on an outdoor clothesline.	Wet clothes on an indoor clothesline will add humidity to your home and increase the load on your air-conditioning system.
Use cold water for wash loads.	Most clothes and other items will get clean in cold water, if you use the proper detergent. If you need to wash a warm- or hot-water load, run it during the late-evening or early-morning hours.
Only wash full loads.	If you don't have enough clothes for a full load, set the washer's water level to match the load's size.

Natural Ventilation and Fans

Close windows and doors during the hottest part of the day.	If your house is well-tightened and insulated, your inside rooms should stay relatively cool during mid- to late-afternoon hours. Close windows early in the morning. If you don't let warm air into your home, you can delay using your air conditioning until later in the day.
Open windows on cool, low-humidity nights.	Natural or (fan-boosted) nighttime ventilation flushes out internal and solar heat that builds up during the day.
Use window fans to create cross-ventilation on warm, still days.	Open windows on the shady side of your house and position the fans so they blow air out of windows on the hot side of the house. The resulting pressure difference will cause air from the outside to flow through your house. While this option doesn't work well on very hot and humid days, you might be surprised at how well it works the rest of the time.
Leave windows closed when the humidity is high.	If it's humid and you use your air-conditioning regularly, you're better off not opening your windows on cooler days or at night. Your air conditioner will have to work extra hard to remove excessive humidity from your house before it can begin to cool it.
A ceiling fan will allow you to be comfortable at a higher temperature in occupied rooms.	A good ceiling fan should create enough air movement that you will be comfortable at 82° F and 80% relative humidity. If you're using the fan to supplement or circulate air-conditioning, you should be able to raise the thermostat a full 4° F above the standard 78° F setting and still be comfortable. For every degree you raise your air conditioner's thermostat above 78° F, you'll save about 3% - 5% on your cooling costs.