



Beat the Heat Summer Cooling Tips

During the hot summer months, many Ohioans look for ways to beat the heat. There are three options consumers can consider to make their homes cooler during periods of warm temperatures.

Natural cooling methods

There are several natural methods that you can use to keep your home cool when it is hot outside.

Blocking heat from reaching the home

One way to block heat from entering your home is through exterior and interior shading. Exterior shading includes planting trees and shrubs around the home, preferably on the south and southwest sides. Interior shading includes blinds, drapes and window treatments. Shading works most efficiently when it blocks the heat before it reaches the home. Another way to block the heat is by adding insulation to the attic and walls of your home or by using low-e films, a thin plastic film that sticks on windows to block the heat while letting the light in. Finally, a no-cost option is to reduce the number of appliances and lights that you use during the warmest part of the day.

Using fans

Fans are used to create breezes and move air from one area to another. You should turn off fans when you leave the room to save energy. Using fans during mild weather and at night can save you up to 50 percent in cooling costs over running the air conditioner.

Whole house fans

By using a whole house or attic fan, you can reduce the indoor temperature three to eight degrees, depending on the outside temperature. Whole house fans are best used during cooler times of the day, such as overnight. A whole house fan pulls in

air from open windows and exhausts warm air out through the attic and roof vents. You should not use whole house fans while running the air conditioning. To work properly, the house must have large attic vents and you must have windows open for pressure relief.

Ventilating fans

Ventilating fans can circulate the air to make you feel cooler, bring in outside air or exhaust air to the outside. It is important to use ventilation fans to remove heat and humidity generated by bathing and cooking. Keep in mind that overusing ventilation fans can pull cool air out of the home, make it harder and costlier to stay cool.

Ceiling fans

Ceiling fans are most effective in large rooms and produce higher air speeds with less noise than box or oscillating fans. When you use a ceiling fan along with air conditioning, you can set the thermostat higher than normal while maintaining a comfortable temperature.

Air conditioners and dehumidifiers

Air conditioners are an easy way to cool a room or home and are best if used along with natural cooling.

When using an air conditioner, do not set the thermostat lower than the desired temperature. The recommended temperature is 78°. By raising the temperature five degrees for eight hours can save 10 percent on a household's electric bill.

There are several aspects to making sure your air conditioner runs efficiently. Make sure that you purchase the correct size air conditioner for the space you will be cooling. In this case, bigger does not always equal better. If you buy an air conditioner that is bigger than you need, it can cost you more not only to run the unit, but can be more expensive purchase. An air conditioning unit that is too big will cycle on and off more frequently causing the indoor temperature to fluctuate more, reducing the amount

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of moisture that is removed and creating a less comfortable climate.

Also, have your air conditioner checked before each cooling season and either clean or replace the filter monthly. When buying a new air conditioner, look for an Energy Star rated unit and hire a qualified contractor to install it properly.

Window air conditioners

As with regular air conditioners, have your window unit checked before each cooling season and either clean or replace filters monthly. Turn off or reduce settings when you leave a room. You can reduce the amount of air that needs to be cooled by closing the door to the room and keeping windows closed. There are several items you should consider before buying a window unit:

- Does the electrical system need to be upgraded?
- Do you need to add a grounded outlet?
- Do you need an appliance grade extension cord?
- What are the costs involved? Including the initial purchase and installation cost as well as the cost to run the unit.
- How do you get the correctly sized unit?

Heat pumps

A heat pump draws warm air from your home and releases it outdoors. It also dehumidifies the indoor air as it cools it. Heat pumps work by

pulling air in and passing it over a coil containing liquid refrigerant which cools the air. The cooled air cannot hold as much moisture as it did at a higher temperature so the excess moisture condenses on the outside of the coil, resulting in the dehumidification of the air. The cooled, dehumidified air is then forced (by a fan) into the duct system which in turn circulates it throughout the home.

Dehumidifiers

Although dehumidifiers remove moisture from the air, they flow heat back into your home. To control moisture and reduce the need for a dehumidifier, keep your basement door closed if you have windows open.

For information on energy efficiency, contact the OCC toll free at 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) to request "Smart Energy Tips" or visit online at www.pickocc.org. Many Ohio utilities also have energy efficiency programs that will help consumers save money while keeping cool in the summer. Consumers should contact their local utilities for more information on available programs.

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, represents the interests of 4.5 million households in proceedings before state and federal regulators and in the courts. The state agency also educates consumers about electric, natural gas, telephone and water issues and resolves complaints from individuals. To receive utility information, brochures, schedule a presentation or file a utility complaint, residential consumers may call 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) toll free in Ohio or visit the OCC Web site at www.pickocc.org.

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services.

For additional information from the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel:

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