

Tricks to Keep Your House Cool this Summer

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RISMEDIA, July 3, 2010--As the temperatures continue to rise this summer, so does the cost of keeping your home cool. While homeowners across the country come to depend on air conditioners to keep the temperature down during the warm summer months, there are other options that will keep you cool while keeping your energy bill low.

Fans and ceiling fans

-If you're looking for ways to beat the heat, a ceiling fan can be a great investment for your home. This one appliance can make a room feel 6 or 7 degrees cooler, and even the most power-hungry fan costs less than \$10 a month to use if you keep it on for 12 hours a day. Good fans make it possible for you to raise your thermostat setting and save on air-conditioning costs. Fans don't use much energy, but when air is circulating, it feels much cooler. Ceiling fans are best, but a good portable fan can be very effective as well.

-You should remember that even mild air movement of 1 mph can make you feel three or four degrees cooler. Also, make sure your ceiling fan is turned for summer – you should feel the air blown downward.

Shades, drapes or blinds

-Install white window shades, drapes or blinds to reflect heat away from the house. Close blinds, shades and draperies facing the sun (east-facing windows in the morning and west-facing windows in the afternoon) to keep the sun's heat out and help fans or air conditioners cool more efficiently. Always remember that the best way to keep your home cool is to keep the heat out.

Internal Heat

-The most common sources of internal heat gain are; appliances, electronic devices and lighting. Be aware of devices in your home that are generating heat and if you have air conditioning, use it wisely.

Don't put lamps, televisions or other heat-generating appliances next to your air-conditioning thermostat, because the heat from these appliances will cause the air conditioner to run longer. The heat they produce will make the thermostat think your house is warmer than it really is, and your system will run harder than it needs to.

-Unless you absolutely need them, turn off incandescent lights and heat-generating appliances. Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents; they produce the same light but use a fifth the energy and heat.

-You should also try to avoid heat-generating activities such as cooking on hot days or during the hottest part of the day. If you are cooking, use your range fan to vent the hot air out of your house. By reducing the amount of heat in your home, you will use less energy to cool it.

Plants

-Plant trees or shrubs to shade air conditioning units, but not block the airflow. A unit operating in the shade uses less electricity. Deciduous trees planted on the south and west sides will keep your house cool in the summer and allow the sunlight to warm the house during the winter.

Roof and Walls

-Paint your roof white – If you've got a flat roof, paint it with a specially formulated reflective paint or just paint it white. The reflective effect will help to keep the rooms under the flat roof much cooler.

Other things to remember

-Humidity makes room air feel warmer, so reduce indoor humidity. Minimize mid-day washing and drying clothes, showering and cooking. When you must do these things, turn on ventilating fans to help extract warm, moist air.

-Avoid landscaping with lots of unshaded rock, cement, or asphalt on the south or west sides of your home because it increases the temperature around the house and radiates heat to the house after the sun has set.

-If the attic isn't already insulated or is under-insulated, insulate it now. Upgrading from 3 inches to 12 inches can cut cooling costs by 10%.

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