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# 9 Ways to Stay Cool for Less



Summer? It's great. Summertime electricity bills? Not so much.

In many ways, staying warm during the winter is a lot easier than staying cool during the summer. Come February, you can always wrap yourself up in a cozy blanket or crawl inside the nearest Taun-Taun. But on a blazing hot July afternoon, odds are you're going to be blasting the AC to cool down—and running up your electricity bill.

That's why we reached out to our favorite energy and home experts to get their tips for keeping your home cool without melting down your [budget](#). Enjoy!

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## 1. Shop for cheaper electricity

According to Kelly Bedrich, co-founder of [ElectricityPlans.com](#) ([@shopelectricity](#)), “One way to reduce your home a/c bills is to address *how much you're actually paying for electricity*.”

“Many consumers can actually shop for cheaper electricity rates,” says Bedrich. “If you're fortunate enough to live in a [state whose residents can shop](#) for electricity or natural gas, you can easily save 25 percent or more on your monthly energy costs just by shopping electric suppliers. Customers can reduce their rates from as much as 15 cents/kWh to as little as 7 cents/kWh.” (What's kWh, you ask? It's a kilowatt hour and it's a unit of measurement for energy costs. And you want to keep yours low!)

He says, “Changing electricity providers requires almost no effort and zero change in lifestyle. We often see clients save as much as 30 percent off of their current monthly expense simply by using an electricity shopping site to shop around and get competitive energy quotes.”

“This can obviously add up to big savings, especially for larger homes and hot summer temperatures,” he says.

## **2. Keep it at 72 degrees**

John Hales is the owner of [Mr. Electric](#) of Augusta ([@MrElectricCor](#)). He says that “One way to reduce the electric bill is to set the temperature at 72 degrees.

According to Hale, “It’s a comfortable temperature and won’t overwork the air conditioning unit during the hot summer months.”

## **3. Get a whole house fan**

Elizabeth Dodson and John Bodrozic are the co-founders for [Homezada](#) ([@HomeZada](#)), a company that helps regular people manage their home improvement needs. To keep your summer cooling costs down, they advise investing in a whole house fan.

Dodson says, “This unit is affordable and will reside in your ceiling and pulls the hot air out of the home and adds in cool air that we often experience at night.”

“When it gets cool in the late evening and night,” says Bodrozic, “open the windows to the house and turn on the fan. It sucks in the cooler night air into the house and sucks the hot air in the house into the attic. These units tend to draw much less power to run than air conditioning units.”

According to Dodson, “Running a whole house fan for one hour can have the same effect of running an air conditioning unit all day.”

## **4. Multiple box fans work too**

“I have central A/C in my house,” says Karen Hoxmeier, creator and owner of [MyBargainBuddy.com](#) ([@MyBargainBuddy](#)), “but I only run it when absolutely necessary because it can really get expensive.”

She agrees that, “Installing a whole-house fan in the attic is a great way to cool off your house without breaking the bank.”

Hoxmeier also says that “If you cannot afford a whole house fan, placing box fans in the windows when the temperature is cooler outside, typically in the evenings or early morning, will pull the cool outside air into your house very quickly.”

“If security is not an issue, for example,” she says, “you can leave the fans running all night in an upstairs window to get your home as cool as possible.”

## **5. And of course: ceiling fans**

According to J.B.Sassano, President of [Mr. Handyman \(@Mrhandymantips\)](#), installing ceiling fans could “cut air conditioning costs by as much as 40 percent in the summer.” Not only that, but they will also “save on heating costs in the winter, by circulating warm air down from the ceiling.”

Just make sure that you keep this next piece of advice in mind: “During the summer,” states Sassano, “the air should flow into the room, so adjust the ceiling fan settings so the blades spin counter-clockwise.”

## **6. Get a smart thermostat**

According to the smart home experts at [Z-Wave.com \(@ZWave\)](#), “The average American household can be saving up to \$200 per year of its off energy bill with a smart climate control system, like a Z-Wave thermostat.”

“Smart thermostats can control the climate in your home and lower the AC while you are away from the home to save, and you can even set temperature limits and a schedule,” they say. “You can keep your home a bit warmer during the day and then set the thermostat to cool your home before you arrive.

“Using Z-Wave smart home tech to create “scenes” to turn off your AC when a door is left open also help to save energy and generate cost savings.”

## **7. Maintain your AC units**

Bodrozic says that one way to minimize the costs of cooling your home is to “Make sure your air conditioning units are operating efficiently.”

A basic preventative maintenance task everyone can do,” says Bodrozic, “is to make sure there are no overgrown shrubs blocking free airflow around the units. Blocking air flow causes the units to work harder and longer to cool the house. Getting an HVAC technician to inspect the unit can also help to make sure they are running efficiently.”

“It is the same situation with the air filters in the house,” he adds. “You don’t want clogged air filters restricting air flow back to the cooling units.”

If you have central air, Sassano has a recommendation. “Adjust or close vents in rooms that do not require as much heat or A/C,” he says. “This will allow the air to flow through other areas of the home more efficiently.”

(Think you might need some professional help with your home maintenance? Both Mr. Electric and Mr. Handyman both belong to [Neighborly \(@GetNeighborly\)](#), a community of home service experts that can help you find maintenance businesses in your area. Check them out!)

## **8. Stay dark**

Dodson advises that you can help keep your home cool by “closing your blinds or draperies in rooms that are often not used. These rooms may be a little dark, but the sun will not have an opportunity to heat the room through your windows.”

According to Hales, “Following basic rules like leaving the lights off when nobody’s home or a room is left unattended is a great way to reduce costs, especially during the summer months.

“If you have kids, it is a good idea to get motion sensor lights,” he says. “They are set to automatically turn off after there is no detection of people in the room.”

## **9. Check for leaks**

To increase energy efficiency, Sassano says that you should “plug overlooked energy leaks around the house. Use low VOC caulk and foam strips around windows and door frames that leak air.”

“If light shows through from the outside,” he says, “[then] the door is leaking heat in the winter and cool air in the summer.”

He suggests, “Add door sweeps and door shoe gaskets,” because “a 1/8” space around a door is like having a brick-sized hole in a wall.” He also recommends that you “adjust door knobs and deadbolt strike plates semi-annually to ensure doors shut tightly.

Lastly, Sassano says that you should also check your light switches, as they “can be an overlooked source of air leaks.”

“Hold a wet hand in front of a light switch plate or outlet,” he says, and “if you feel air, there is a leak.” He recommends “Installing foam gaskets behind all the light switches and outlets can stop these energy leaks.”

When it comes to preventing air leakage through your windows, Hales adds that “You can also get double-paned windows installed, which help keep warm air out and cool air in during the summer.”

*Have your own ways cheap hacks for staying cool during the summer? Let us know! You can find us on Twitter at [@OppLoans](#).*