10 tips to stay cool

and save on home energy

1. Make the switch to LED

Did you know that incandescent light bulbs produce heat? If you need to swap out some light bulbs, consider using LEDs. In addition to keeping your home cooler, LEDs last at least 25 times longer and consume up to 90 percent less electricity than incandescent bulbs. By switching five of your home's most frequently used bulbs with ENERGY STAR® certified LEDs, it's possible to save $75 on energy costs annually.

2. Seal those leaks

Cooling your home is a significant cost on your utility bill, so be sure to keep those dollars from slipping through the cracks. Small leaks can be equivalent to leaving open a 3-foot-by-3-foot window. Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal air leaks around doors and windows to prevent warm air from leaking into your home.

3. Cool efficiently

Don't waste money cooling an empty home. Install a programmable thermostat and in warm weather, schedule the thermostat to raise the temperature when you are away or asleep, and lower it at other times. The U.S. Department of Energy recommends 78 degrees in the summer.

4. Maintain your HVAC system

Keep cool air flowing by cleaning or changing your furnace filter often. Also vacuum your air intake vents regularly to remove any dust buildup and ensure that furniture and other objects are not blocking the airflow through your registers.

5. Spend evenings outdoors

Make the most of cooler evening temperatures. A backyard cookout is a fun alternative to heating up your kitchen.

6. Adjust ceiling fans

Ceiling fans have two rotation settings – clockwise and counterclockwise. Ceiling fans should spin counterclockwise in summer to create a breezy downdraft.

7. Close blinds & shades

Curtains, blinds, and shades can keep your utility bills in check. Keep windows covered on your west- and south-facing windows during the day to prevent sunlight from heating up your home.

8. Get an energy-efficient dehumidifier

In hot, humid climates, a dehumidifier is a perfect partner to your A/C and a great way to lower humidity levels in your home. A dehumidifier helps lower energy costs because your A/C won't have to work as hard. When the air in your home is too humid, your air conditioner has to do double duty—cooling the air as well as removing moisture. An A/C that works too hard will also break more often, requiring lengthy and expensive repairs.

9. If you aren't using it, unplug it

From your computer to your toaster, all electronics generate heat. Even if it's switched off, just being plugged in generates a small amount of heat in the wiring. To keep things cool, unplug any electronics you're not using. It's not much per device, but add up all the gizmos in your home, and it can make a few degrees difference.

10. Look for the ENERGY STAR® label

ENERGY STAR® labeled windows can significantly cut home energy costs compared to single-pane windows, while increasing indoor comfort. If you are undertaking a major home remodel or new build, consider ENERGY STAR® qualified windows, HVAC equipment, and appliances.