

Simple things you can do to stay cool

- ✓ Reduce heat gain by turning out lights or using low-wattage bulbs or lamps.
- ✓ Reduce heat gain by not using the oven.
- ✓ Reduce heat gain by turning off appliances and electronics. Avoid the dryer.
- ✓ Cover north (southern hemisphere), east (morning) and west (afternoon) windows. A blanket or towels pegged to the curtain rod can be used in place of sun-out blinds.
- ✓ In a pinch, cover windows with aluminium foil to reduce heat gain.
- ✓ Shut windows on north, east and west sides of the house to avoid hot wind.
- ✓ Open windows for cross breeze in the late afternoon and evening.
- ✓ Arrange furniture and declutter to allow the free flow of air.
- ✓ Use cold packs to keep cool.
- ✓ Wear light clothes.
- ✓ Take a quick rinse off in the shower or sit in the bath.
- ✓ Place container trees / hanging pots or shade cloth in front of north facing walls.
- ✓ Turn off fans when not in use.
- ✓ Drink plenty of water on hot days to stay hydrated.
- ✓ Use downstairs rooms – hot air rises.
- ✓ Hang a damp sheet (or the washing) over a window with a breeze or in front of a fan (low humidity climates only).
- ✓ Relax and chill out! Physical, mental and emotional stress makes you hot.
- ✓ Soak your feet in cool water. Add peppermint oil for a soothing foot bath.
- ✓ Leave the house. Eat in the backyard. Go for a picnic, a walk in the rainforest, a swim.
- ✓ Choose fans or evaporative coolers (in low humidity climates) instead of the air-con.

Reducing the cost of air-conditioning

- Have you agreed on a family rule for the use of air-conditioning i.e. only if the temperature goes over 35°C and only in the late afternoon/evening? Stick the rules to the unit or remote for everyone to see.
- Have you set the thermostat between 24°C and 27°C?
 - Do you use ceiling fans to circulate the cooled air? When the desired temperature is reached, switch off the air con and the ceiling fans will continue to circulate the cooled air.
- If your air conditioner has louvers, do you point these towards the ceiling?
- Do you maintain and clean filters regularly, according to the manufacturer's instructions?
- If you have an external unit, do you shade it or is it installed on the east /south side of your home?
- Do you cool just one room instead of the whole house?
- Do you shut windows and doors to cool one room?
- Have you installed window and door strips to seal leaks?
- If your home is open plan, have you zoned off one area to be cooled by hanging a sheet or blanket from the ceiling?
- Have you installed a timer so that the air-conditioner doesn't run longer than it has to?
- If you have ducted air conditioning, do you check ducts regularly for leaks?
- Have you considered zoning your ducted air-conditioning so that you only cool one or two rooms instead of the whole house?

Home investments to reduce cooling costs

- Have you installed ceiling fans where appropriate?
- Have you installed sun-out blinds or curtains on the north, east and west side of you home? Don't forget to close these during the hottest part of the day.
- Have you used insulating tape to seal window and door gaps?
- Have you installed awnings (retractable or removable ones if you have cold winters) on north, east and west windows where appropriate?
- Do you shade the north, east and west sides of the house using deciduous trees, removable shade cloth, hanging plants, vines, container plants etc.?
- Do you have shrubs, trees or lawn instead of cement or paving on the north side of your home?
- Have you installed insulation? Have you checked old insulation to ensure it's still effective?
- Have you installed roof ventilators / whirlygigs / whole roof fan and ceiling vents?
- Do you have tiled floors?
- Do you have a light coloured roof and external walls?
- Does your roof have a reflective coating?
- Do you have a radiant barrier on the underside of your roof?
- Do you have double glazing *or* a reflective film applied to the windows?

When buying new air-conditioning

- Choose a small window unit or split system unit over ducted or central air-conditioning.
- Check the energy ratings and choose the most energy efficient air-conditioner.
- Think about what rooms need cooling and choose the smallest air-conditioner that suits your home and your needs.