



# COOLING YOUR HOME IN SUMMER

## FAST FACTS FOR HOUSEHOLDS

Our summer climate can mean days of very hot weather where keeping cool is a priority. Cooling our homes can use a lot of power and can add to power bills.

There are many low or no cost ways to cool your home before you consider buying a cooling system. Simple actions can reduce the temperature of your home, keeping you comfortable and cool without a big power bill. You can:

- **Ventilate** – draw cool air in on the shaded sides of buildings and create natural air flow throughout your home.
- **Zone** and **draught-proof** – close off unused areas of the home and seal windows, doors and any other gaps.
- **Shade windows** – use awnings or plants on the outside, or blinds and shutters on the inside, to protect windows that get the sun.
- **Insulate** the ceiling, and if possible, walls and floors.

### VENTILATION

Creating natural ventilation in your home is a low-cost way to reduce the temperature and make your living space more comfortable and livable.

Air movement has a cooling effect on the body and makes the temperature in the room appear lower by generating a natural breeze. Cross ventilation is even better, allowing cool air in while clearing hot air out. You can:

- Allow air movement to pass through a living space by opening a window or door that is facing a shaded or cool area. Provide a passage for it to exit on the opposite side or hotter side of the house.
- Open windows at night when the temperature has dropped to assist with clearing out hot air.

### ZONING AND DRAUGHT-PROOFING

Draught-proofing adds significantly to the energy efficiency of your home. For example, just by closing off unused areas, you can save around \$75\* per year on your power bills.

Other ways you can save include:

- Closing doors to create different zones in your home. Doorways between air conditioned and non air conditioned areas will help to keep cool air in.
- Installing draught excluders or weather-strips at the base of doors and between the door and its frame.
- Using plants, other buildings and fences as wind breaks to shelter your home from intense heat or cold.
- Installing doorways at the base of stairwells – it's another great way to zone off unused areas of your home, keeping the cool air where you need it.
- Installing swing doors instead of sliding doors so less cool air can escape. Remember to keep sliding doors closed.
- Using automatic door closers. They are a good option for swing and sliding doors and can be fitted to doors leading to ventilated areas or to doors leading outside.
- Replacing louvre windows to avoid draughts and air leakage.

### WINDOWS AND EXTERNAL SHADING

Around half of unwanted heat is absorbed through exposed windows. Follow these tips on how to use windows to control the temperature in your home:

- Shading your windows to block out the hot summer sun can save you around \$45\* per year.
- Use external shading to protect windows in order to prevent up to 90 per cent of heat getting in.
- Fit external blinds or awnings to north, east and west facing windows – it's more effective for blocking out morning and afternoon rays than internal blinds, curtains or shutters.
- Ensure internal windows are fitted with lined curtains, or close fitting Holland or Roman blinds, to reduce the amount of heat coming in.
- Double glaze your windows. It involves installing two sheets of glass separated by 12mm to 20mm with a



There are simple things we can all do that will lower power bills and reduce our impact on the environment.

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pocket of air between them. This may cost more at the start, but it is highly effective for heat prevention and loss.

- If you're on a budget, secondary glazing is a low-cost way to protect glass from the heat and cold. A double-sided heat intensive membrane is fitted to the window to provide a layer of protection and is about a third of the cost of double glazing.
- Get the most out of your north facing windows – a deciduous tree or external pergola allows maximum sunlight in winter and shade in summer.

**DID YOU KNOW?** About 50 per cent of heat that circulates in the home comes directly through your windows. Making changes outside your windows – like planting trees or installing a pergola – can keep your home cooler by up to 90 per cent.

## INSULATION

Insulation is an important step to a cool and comfortable home. Effective and efficient insulation can keep you up to 7°C cooler in summer and 10°C warmer in winter and can save you up to \$125\* per year.

Here are some helpful tips when considering insulation:

- Look for the R-value rating of insulation – it's a measure of its capability to resist heat flow. Different R-values are appropriate for different climates. Read our [Insulation fact sheet](#) for more information.
- Start with ceiling and roof insulation – it's the most effective way to insulate a home. If you can afford it, external wall insulation is also effective, saving 10 to 60 per cent of heating and cooling costs.
- Floor insulation can reduce electricity costs by 5 to 10 per cent.

You can also make your insulation work harder for you:

- Close curtains or blinds on days of extreme heat or cold and you can significantly boost the insulation of your home.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Ceiling and roof insulation can save up to 45 per cent of heating and cooling power use. Choose the best R-value for the climate you live in.

- Complement your insulation with window shading and ventilation in summer to avoid trapping heat inside your home.
- Install draught excluders or weather-strips at the base of doors and between the door and its frame.
- Use plants, other buildings and fences as wind breaks to shelter your home from intense heat or cold.

**DID YOU KNOW?** If you're renovating or planning home improvements visit [savepower.nsw.gov.au](http://savepower.nsw.gov.au) for simple things you can do to make your home warm in winter and cool in summer.

## USE YOUR AIR CONDITIONER MORE EFFICIENTLY

If you do have an air conditioner, there are some [simple things](#) you can do to keep your home cool for less:

- Keep your air conditioning set at 23°C or higher. The temperature in your home should be comfortable – not icy. By increasing the temperature by just 1°C you can reduce your power use for cooling by up to 15 per cent.
- Save over \$130\* per year by simply turning up the temperature of your air conditioner; closing doors; zoning off rooms not in use and drawing your curtains.
- If you have a ceiling fan, use it instead of an air conditioner and save up to \$140\* per year. You can also use the exhaust fans in your kitchen and bathrooms to briefly expel hot air overnight.
- Reduce the need for air conditioning by doing the cooking and ironing in the cooler part of the day – that way you could take advantage of cheaper electricity rates and leave the home feeling cool and comfortable.

Join the NSW homes that have pledged to save power by using the Power Pledge tool at [savepower.nsw.gov.au](http://savepower.nsw.gov.au)

Choose from a list of energy efficient actions you can do to save power, money and our environment. Use the Power Pledge tool to track your progress and see how much you can save.

**[savepower.nsw.gov.au](http://savepower.nsw.gov.au)**

\* Savings based on household electricity price July 2011.