



TOP 10 ENERGY SAVING TIPS FOR SUMMER:



1. Get an air conditioner tune up.

You should schedule this maintenance once a year, ideally in early spring. During a tune up, your HVAC technician will clean the system, perform preventative maintenance, ensure proper fluid levels and take other steps to optimize energy efficiency and prevent sudden breakdowns.

2. Seal and insulate.

You want to keep hot air out and cool air in, so take some time to inspect your home for air leaks and poor attic insulation.

For the most thorough assessment, consider scheduling a professional energy audit in which technicians use infrared heat mapping to pinpoint your home's thermal weak spots.

3. Keep your vents clear.

Your air conditioner can't work efficiently if your vents are blocked by rugs or furniture. Check all of your vents to make sure they're open, free of dust and directing air toward the center of the room.

4. Block out the sun.

It can be beautiful when the sun beams through your windows, but it'll cost you. Keeping the shades or blinds drawn on sun-facing windows is essential to keeping your home cool. Some window treatments work better than others, like reflective shades, blackout drapes and honeycomb blinds.

5. Use ceiling and pedestal fans.

Fans allow you to raise your thermostat up to four degrees without any reduction in comfort, according to the Department of Energy. Just make sure your ceiling fans are turning **counterclockwise** for summer and that you don't leave fans running in empty rooms. Fans don't cool air — just people!

6. Upgrade to a smart thermostat.

The latest thermostats can be controlled from anywhere with the tap of a smartphone, making it easy to warm things up a few degrees when you're

away from home. Many smart thermostats can even learn your heating and cooling habits and anticipate your home comfort needs to save you money.

7. Learn to love your microwave and grill.

It's hot enough outside, and firing up your oven inside won't make your air conditioner's job any easier. Outdoor grilling and microwave cooking are two ways to prepare food without generating extra heat. When only baking will do, consider making smaller portions you can pop in a toaster oven.

8. Curb daytime use of other big appliances.

Some appliances — dryers and dishwashers in particular — can also put out a good deal of unwanted heat. Wait until after dark to run these and other large appliances so that your air conditioner isn't fighting too many battles at once.

9. Upgrade to LED light bulbs.

Lighting used to be a common source of unwanted summertime heat, but in this age of affordable LED lighting, there's no need to sit in the dark. LED light bulbs stay cool to the touch, all while drawing a fraction of the power used by incandescent and fluorescent bulbs. Make a plan to upgrade all the bulbs in your home, even if you just buy a few bulbs per month.

10. Plan for window upgrades.

Window replacement is usually a costly proposition, but it's one that pays you back over time in energy efficiency and comfort. If your windows are single-pane or aged and drafty, the energy savings could be significant. Make a financial plan for this home investment if you're not ready to upgrade now.