



Your Healthy Home by Your Inspection Expert

Beat the Heat with These Energy Saving Ideas

Since this month is July, you probably have your air conditioner running full blast, don't you? Whether your air conditioner is in your window or is a central unit, you know that this time of year you are paying a lot of money to feed this beast! Consider these five money saving tips.

1. Check the filters. If they are dirty, clean or replace. Make sure the filter is the right size! You'd be amazed at how often I see filters not covering the opening, or jammed into the opening of the air return.
2. If you do not already have a programmable thermostat, then consider getting one and programming it. If you're not the technical type, read the step by step instructions in the manual or find a teenager. Once done, this "set it and forget it" system will save you hundreds of dollars over the course of a year. Before programming, figure out your schedule. What rooms will you be in the most and when? For example, put the master bedroom on 84 when you're not there, and 74 for sleeping.
3. Close the drapes or lower the shades on the sunny side of the house during the hottest portions of the day. If your windows are not tinted, consider it. Turn on fans. The amount of electricity fans draw is very small and the breeze will trick your body into thinking it's 5 degrees cooler. Fans are what they call 100% duty cycle - meaning you can leave them on all the time.
4. More than 25% of the heat in your house is absorbed through the ceiling (roof). If you don't already have an attic fan or ridge vent, consider installing one. Whereas you want ventilation in the attic, you don't want ventilation (or air movement) around doors and windows where the

cool air can escape, so make sure places where utility lines enter the home are caulked and sealed and doors and windows have weather-stripping.

5. Remember what Mom said when you were a kid? She was right! Turn lights off when you leave the room. If you have track lighting, those incandescent bulbs generate enormous amounts of heat. Change over to CFLs (compact fluorescents) - you can even get CFLs that will work with dimmers. These bulbs will cost more to buy new than the incandescents, but will last longer and be much more efficient. If you keep forgetting to turn off lights, install a motion sensor that will turn them off when you leave the room.

While there are dozens of other cost savings tips for summer savings, following these five will cut at least 15% off your monthly bill.

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