

14 Ways to Stay Cool without Turning on the AC (care2.com)

There have been some unseasonably warm days already, with highs in the 90s, and the temptation to flick the switch on that A/C unit to “on” is very strong. Before using the air conditioner, consider this: home cooling accounts for 5 percent of the energy we consume in the U.S. each year. That’s about 140 million tons of CO2 emissions annually! Here are some ways to fight that urge by keeping your house cooler naturally.

- 1. Keep the shades drawn during the day.** When sunlight streams through the windows, it creates a miniature greenhouse effect in your home.
- 2. Reflect the heat.** If you do want to open the windows, consider investing in some reflective window film to help keep the heat outside where you want it to be.
- 3. Let the cool evening air in.** If temperatures are on the chilly side after the sun goes down, crack a few windows open to let a breeze come through and cool the house. Just be sure to close them before the temperature starts to rise again!
- 4. Insulate!** You want to keep cool air inside, so grab that caulk gun and seal off anywhere that air might be escaping. A handy draft dodger can help seal up those tricky leaks at the bottoms of doors and windows.
- 5. Get rid of incandescent lights.** Not only do those suckers use more energy, they generate a lot more heat than CFL or LED light bulbs.
- 6. Make sure your ceiling fans are running counter clockwise.** Most modern fans will have a little switch on the side to reverse their direction. You want the fan to go clockwise in winter to push warm air down and reverse it in the summer to circulate cool air.
- 7. Drink icy beverages.** This one seems like a no-brainer, but it still bears mentioning. What better way to beat the heat than to cool your body from the inside out?
- 8. Dress appropriately.** Loose-fitting, light clothing goes a long way toward keeping you cool. It’s time to bust out those organic cotton shorts and tank tops!
- 9. Grab a towel.** A towel soaked in cold water is a great way to cool down. Apply it to your neck, wrists, and forehead for some relief during the hottest part of the day.
- 10. Avoid the stove and oven.** Both of these will add unnecessary heat to the house. Instead, fire up that outdoor grill or whip up a salad or sandwich. Your rice cooker, slow cooker, and pressure cooker are other alternatives to heating up the house with the stove or oven.
- 11. Try a buckwheat pillow.** If the heat is preventing you from sleeping, switching to a buckwheat pillow can make a big difference, since buckwheat doesn’t hold on to your body heat like conventional pillows do.
- 12. Learn from your pets.** How does your cat cope with the hottest part of the day? She snoozes! If you can squeeze in an afternoon nap, go for it.
- 13. Chill out.** Turn on your table fan and stick a frozen bottle of water in front of it to get some cold air circulating.
- 14. Plant a tree.** If you can, plant trees on the side of your house that gets the most sun. The extra shade will protect your home from the sun’s rays.