

# Central Air Conditioning Tips

## Your Air Conditioner

**A dusty filter reduces air flow.** Examine your unit's air filters once a month and clean or replace filters when necessary. Keeping your filters clean can help save energy.

The outdoor unit of the air conditioner contains a condensing coil, a type of heat exchanger which depends on large quantities of air flow to dump heat outside your home. **Keep this equipment clear of tall grass, leaves and other debris.**

**Do not enclose the outdoor unit with solid fencing or dense shrubs, or place the unit under a deck.** Provide at least 2 feet of clearance on all sides of the equipment and 5 feet of clearance at the top.

Do not cover the outdoor unit of the air conditioner with plastic or an air tight cover. This will cause the unit to rust.

**You should never need to add refrigerant to a system.** If you do, there is a refrigerant leak in the system and should be fixed by an air conditioning professional.

The "on" fan setting on your central air conditioner can circulate air continuously through your home. This will usually even out the hot spots in your home.

Humidity is a significant load on an air conditioner. While it's tempting to give your air conditioner a rest on cool nights, watch the weather forecast before you decide to open the windows at night. If tomorrow is going to be hot again, keep the air conditioning on and the home closed through the night to keep the humidity out of the house.

**Do not turn the air conditioner off when leaving and then back on when returning home.** Latent heat buildup in the walls and furniture in the house will make the unit work harder to remove the heat; thus taking longer to cool down. A good compromise is turning up the temperature five to ten degrees or by installing a programmable digital thermostat to do this automatically for you.

Keep all air conditioning vents free from obstructions, such as draperies, furniture or rugs. Clean these vents regularly with a vacuum or broom.

Have your air conditioning system checked annually by a qualified air conditioning contractor to make sure its working at peak efficiency.

## Around the House

Use ceiling or oscillating fans to circulate the air.

During peak cooling hours, solar heat gain can account for one-third of the load on your air conditioner. Close the drapes on the sunny side of your home while you are there, or close all window coverings if you are leaving for the day.

Turn off unnecessary lights and use energy-efficient fluorescent light bulbs that use less energy and give off less heat.

Seal air leaks with caulking and weather stripping, and minimize door traffic to keep the cool air inside.

Keep blinds closed, curtains drawn, and window shades down. A working attic fan would be a good idea with plenty of insulation in the ceiling & walls. Keep storm windows airtight and outside doors and openings close, etc.

If your home does have hot spots, contact a qualified air conditioning contractor to properly balance your registers.



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