10 tips to stay cool

and save on home energy

Kansas Corporation Commission

1. Cool efficiently

Keep your house warmer than normal when you are away or asleep and lower the thermostat setting at other times. A programmable thermostat allows you to do this automatically, without sacrificing comfort. The U.S. Department of Energy recommends setting the thermostat at 78 degrees in the summer.

2. Seal those leaks

Cooling your home is a significant cost on your utility bill, so be sure to keep those dollars from slipping through the cracks. Small leaks can be equivalent to leaving open a 3-foot-by-3-foot window. Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal air leaks around doors and windows to prevent warm air from leaking into your home.

3. Maintain your HVAC system

Keep cool air flowing by cleaning or changing your furnace filter often. Also vacuum your air intake vents regularly to remove any dust buildup and ensure that furniture and other objects are not blocking the airflow through your registers.

4. Consider an energy-efficient dehumidifier

In hot, humid climates, a dehumidifier is a perfect partner to your A/C and a great way to lower humidity levels in your home. A dehumidifier helps lower energy costs because your A/C won't have to work as hard. When the air in your home is too humid, your air conditioner has to do double duty—cooling the air as well as removing moisture. An A/C that works too hard will also break more often, requiring lengthy and expensive repairs.

5. Close blinds & shades

Curtains, blinds, and shades can keep your utility bills in check. Keep windows covered on your west- and south-facing windows during the day to prevent sunlight from heating up your home.

6. Adjust ceiling fans

Ceiling fans have two rotation settings – clockwise and counterclockwise. Ceiling fans should spin counterclockwise in summer to create a breezy downdraft. Turn off ceiling fans when you leave the room. Remember that fans cool people, not rooms, by creating a wind chill effect.

7. If you aren't using it, unplug it

From your computer to your toaster, all electronics generate heat. Even if it's switched off, just being plugged in generates a small amount of heat in the wiring. To keep things cool, unplug any electronics you're not using. It's not much per device, but add up all the gizmos in your home, and it can make a few degrees difference.

8. Lower water heating costs

Water heating accounts for about 18% of the energy consumed in your home. The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends setting your water heater at no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit to prevent scalding. The lower setting will also conserve energy and save money. Running only full loads through the dishwasher and laundry cut costs.

9. Look for the ENERGY STAR® label

ENERGY STAR® labeled windows can significantly cut home energy costs compared to single-pane windows, while increasing indoor comfort. If you are undertaking a major home remodel or new build, consider ENERGY STAR® qualified windows, HVAC equipment, and appliances.

10. Spend evenings outdoors

Make the most of cooler evening temperatures. A backyard cookout is a fun alternative to heating up your kitchen.