

# Cool your home the low cost way

A lot of money is spent on the energy needs of our lifestyles, but did you know that Ontarians spend the majority of their energy dollars controlling the temperature of their home?

In the summer, this means keeping it cool, so before cranking up the air conditioning, try a few alternatives first. Even if you're using air conditioning, you'll use less and that will lower your electricity use. Here are some helpful guidelines from Hydro One:

**Draw the curtains on heat** - In the morning, open windows to let cool air in. Then close them, and draw your blinds or drapes during the day. Your home will retain much of the cool morning air.

**Let fans move the air** - Ceiling fans help cool down your home. They don't use much electricity and can help reduce the need for air conditioning. Make sure ceiling fans blow air downwards in summer.

**Cool down your menus too** - One of the easiest things you can do to conserve energy and keep your house cool is to avoid using appliances that heat up the home.

In the summer, use the barbecue and include more cold foods and salads in your menu. Try not to use major appliances in the middle of the day.

The real problem may be humidity - Humid homes feel hotter. Use exhaust fans in kitchens, bathrooms and laundry areas to expel the air directly outside (not into walls or attics). Avoid air-drying clothes in the home and don't store firewood inside.

**Check around the house** - Examine the caulking and weather stripping around your windows and doors. People tend to think this is a winter preparation, but it is just as useful in the summer to ensure that you keep the cool air in. If you have a window air conditioning unit, clean or replace the filter monthly. Dirty filters may restrict air flow and reduce efficiency.

**Turn it off** - Lights, appliances and home electronics use a lot of power and give off heat. During the summer, it's more important than ever to turn them off when you aren't using them. You'll save energy twice.

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