

How to Maximize Comfort and Lower Your Utility Bills

(NAPSA)—If you think summers have been getting hotter in recent years, you may be right. In fact, according to the National Climatic Data Center, 2005 was the warmest year since national records began in 1895. Combine those rising temperatures with increasing energy costs to cool your home, and the situation can be downright unbearable.

To help beat the heat, Lennox Industries, a leading provider of customized home comfort systems, provides answers to some common questions about how to increase home comfort and save money during the hottest months of the year, based on the pioneering and knowledge of company founder Dave Lennox.

How can I lower my utility bills?

With the average homeowner spending more than \$2,100 on energy—about half of it for heating and cooling—the cost of keeping cool can be expensive. To improve your home's energy efficiency and lower utility bills, conduct a simple home energy audit. Start by examining exterior walls, doors, and windows to identify any cracks where cool air could be seeping out, and seal leaks with caulk or weather stripping. Keep window blinds closed during the day to block sunlight from entering the home and plant trees around the house for added shade.

In addition, check your attic's insulation. If it's insufficient, the home's cooling system may have to work harder to regulate the indoor temperature. Add more if there currently is less than five inches.

Finally, be sure to set up an appointment with a home cooling professional to inspect and clean your air conditioner to ensure it's working as efficiently as possible. You may also want to install a programmable thermostat that will automatically adjust the



indoor temperature while you're away, which also can help lower your energy bill.

My house feels sticky and sometimes smells musty. What can I do about it?

Even when the temperature is right, your house may still feel sticky due to excessive humidity, and that can affect your overall comfort and well-being. In fact, too much moisture can lead to the growth of mold and mildew, which can potentially cause health issues.

To determine whether you have a humidity problem, have the air in your home tested. Lennox Industries offers a service known as the Healthy Advantage Program, in which an air-quality monitor is placed inside the home to measure humidity levels, as well as temperature, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, odors, chemical vapors and airborne particles—all of which can affect your health and comfort.

If there is a moisture problem, it's important to inspect the house for any water leaks, and take appropriate measures to correct the problem. You also may want to consider purchasing a dehumidifier, which can significantly reduce the moisture in your home. Lennox recently introduced the Humiditrol whole-home dehumidification system, which is installed in your home's existing duct sys-

tem and can remove up to three times more moisture from the air than a conventional dehumidifier.

My air conditioner is about 20 years old and I'm afraid it's on its last leg. What should I look for when shopping for a new system?

The average lifespan of a quality central air conditioner is about 15 to 20 years, so it's smart to be thinking about replacement. Planning ahead gives you time to conduct research and select the right system based on your specific needs. Consult the Good Housekeeping Institute, as well as manufacturer Web sites and local air conditioning professionals, who can help guide you in making an informed decision.

One of the most important things to consider when shopping for a new system is the seasonal energy efficiency rating (SEER). While the national minimum SEER rating is 13, many newer models have a SEER of 15 and higher, which will help make your home more energy efficient. Some systems, such as the Dave Lennox Signature Collection XC21 air conditioner, are nearly twice as efficient as a standard air conditioner.

Finally, don't put a price tag on comfort. Purchase a system that is priced within your budget, but don't compromise your comfort, household energy efficiency or long-term savings by purchasing a unit that will not satisfy your needs well into the future.

To learn more about customizing your comfort and lowering your utility bills, visit www.lennox.com.



Dave Lennox single-handedly elevated the standard of American living in 1895, when he pioneered the riveted-steel furnace. His vision has shaped modern home comfort through innovation in heating, cooling and indoor air quality products.