



Navigating the Heat to Keep Power Bills Cool

(NAPS)—The heat of summer doesn't just mean it's time to drink more water or eat ice cream to keep cool. It also means an increase in air conditioning and energy to cool your home. The U.S. Energy Information Administration reports households are expected to use 3 percent more electricity this summer compared to 2023.

But keeping cool in the summertime doesn't have to mean sacrificing home energy affordability. Here are some simple energy efficiency steps to help keep monthly power bills down:

Acting Short-Term

Close your window coverings. Ambient sunlight can heat a room, and drawing your curtains and blinds can reduce the sun's heat in your home and keep your air conditioning from running more than necessary.

Consider rearranging furniture near your thermostat or room air conditioner. Lamps and televisions radiate heat and if they are too close to the thermostat, your air conditioning could run more and longer than necessary to cool a room.

Vacuum your air intake vents and keep them clear. Dust builds up on your home's air returns and a couple of minutes with a vacuum can keep the air flow moving. Move toys, furniture and other objects away from the intake vent to keep air moving.

Replace your air filter. Dirty air filters on central and room air conditioning systems can choke off the flow of air to your home's ventilation system. Changing your filter as directed by the manufacturer not only lets air flow freely, but it helps your air conditioning run more efficiently.

Have your central air conditioner checked. Just like you have your furnace serviced and cleaned each fall, you should have your central air conditioning system checked prior to summer. Professionals will perform a comprehensive examination on your outside condenser and inside fan to ensure your system is working at peak efficiency.

Conserving & Managing Energy Use

Turn up the temperature on your thermostat. The lower you set your air conditioning temperature, the more costly it is to operate. For example, a 75-degree setting costs about 18% more than a 78-degree setting. Don't compromise your comfort or safety, but test how cool you really need it.

Run fans with your air conditioning. Oscillating or box fans near your air conditioning vents create an air flow like winter windchills, as cold air is circulated throughout the room.

Think twice before starting your oven. Conventional and convection ovens can add extra heat to your home and force your air conditioner to run unnecessarily. Keep the heat outside by using a grill or, if that's not an option, consider using a microwave or slow cooker to do the job.

Replace incandescent light bulbs with LED bulbs. Incandescent light bulbs are inefficient to use and emit more heat than LED bulbs. According



You can save cold cash and still keep your home cool.

to the U.S. Department of Energy, LED bulbs use at least 75% less energy and last up to 25 times longer than incandescent lighting.

Turn off lights when you're not using them. This can help save money by reducing your electricity bills, extend the life of your light bulbs, and mean you buy bulbs less often.

Prep your home when you go on vacation. If there's a road trip or beach vacation on your calendar, take a couple of extra steps such as turning up your thermostat to keep your air conditioning from running while no one is home. Unplug electronics with remote control or "instant on" features and save \$4 a month.

Thinking Long-Term

Get a professional energy audit. If you're income eligible, you can access no-cost home energy audits through the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's EmPower+ Income-Eligible Weatherization Program. Participating contractors will identify if your home would benefit from energy upgrades, such as installation of high-efficiency lighting; attic and wall insulation; replacement of old, inefficient refrigerators and freezers; and water-saving showerheads. For more information, call 1-877-NYSMART (1-877-697-6278) or visit nysesda.ny.gov/All-Programs/EmPower-New-York-Program.

Consider installing a programmable or smart thermostat. Programmable thermostats let you run your air conditioning on a schedule. Smart thermostats offer the ability to control your home's temperature from your mobile device or computer. Preset your schedule, adjust temperatures remotely, and take full control of your cooling. Smart thermostats could lower your energy bills by up to \$180 a year.

Use National Grid's Budget Plan. Enrolling in a Budget Billing Plan simplifies the process of managing your monthly energy expenses and organizing your household finances. The plan takes the amount you usually pay on your National Grid bills in a year and breaks that amount into twelve balanced monthly payments to help offset the traditionally high winter heating and summer air conditioning peak bills.

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