

15 COOLING SEASON TIPS

As the days get *longer* and *warmer*, the air conditioners start running. What can you do to get the most from your air conditioning system this summer?

- 1** **Make sure your outdoor unit is clean.** The outdoor part of your cooling equipment should be free of mulch or weeds. You should also make sure that it is sitting flat and level, and higher than the ground around it so water does not pool in the bottom when it rains. Don't try to do this yourself, as it is very easy to damage the lines running to the A/C condenser.
- 2** **Use fans.** On those moderately warm days, sometimes a fan is all you need to keep you comfortable in the afternoon until things cool down. If you put the fan by a window, make sure you choose a window on the shady side of the house so you draw in cooler air.
- 3** **Check your airflow.** Make sure the areas around the vents are clear so that nothing blocks your airflow—on both outlets and return air grilles. Drapes and furniture can effectively block air from coming into the room. Check that the dampers are open all the way and vacuum away any dust buildup.
- 4** **Don't use your dryer during the heat of the day.** Your clothes dryer is blowing air out of the house, causing air to be drawn into your house to offset it. If you are drawing in hot air, your air conditioner is just going to have to work harder.
- 5** **Turn off your humidifier.** For most humidifiers (typically the by-pass type), when they are set to the "on" or "winter" mode, moisture is added to your air every time the blower runs. In the summer you don't want to be adding more humidity to your home; that will just make your air conditioning have to run longer. Make sure you set it to the "summer" or "off" setting before you start running your air conditioner.
- 6** **Install a programmable thermostat, and program it.** If you are able to turn the temperature up overnight or when no one is home you can really save some money on your electric bill. A programmable thermostat can be set to bring your home back to a comfortable temperature by the time you need it, and it takes the burden of switching it up and down off of you. I'm always surprised how many people have one of these thermostats but have never taken the time to set it up. Take the time and put the programming in, even if you're not running the air conditioning yet. It will be all set for when you need it. NOTE: If you lost your instructions, they probably are available on the internet. You might also check YouTube; there may even be a video helping to explain the process for your thermostat.
- 7** **Use blinds.** Closing the blinds or drapes on the sunny side of the house can go a long way toward blocking the sun's warmth from heating up your home. This is especially true if you use insulated blinds.

8 Get a **precision tune up every year**. Our local electric company believes in this so much that they offer a rebate to homeowners who have a professional tune up of their air conditioner. Not only does maintained equipment last longer, it can save you over 20% on your utility usage versus non-maintained equipment.

9 Turn off **lights and appliances that are not in use**. They may not add much heat to your home, but little things can add up over time. Plus, they won't be using electricity either!

10 Insulate any **exposed ductwork**. If you have ductwork that runs through an attic or other unconditioned space, consider having it insulated. More of your cold air will be able to make it where it's going.

11 Clean your **indoor coil**. If dirt builds up on the indoor coil, it cannot cool your air the way it's supposed to. If you know that the filter you have been using is not a good quality one, you might need to have your coil cleaned. A service technician can let you know if your coil is dirty during your preventive maintenance visit.

12 Make sure your **filter is clean**. THIS IS A KEY ONE! The technician will check this during your precision tune up, but checking the filter once per summer may not be enough. Dry, dusty conditions, pets or summer pollen can really clog up a filter.

13 Run a **constant fan**. If you have a high-efficiency furnace, you have the ability to run your HVAC system's fan on low speed at a minimal electrical cost. This can pull cooler basement air up into your living space and also helps keep the air temperatures in your home balanced.

14 Seal **leaks in your home**. You don't want your nice, cool air to slip right outside or up into your attic (recessed lights are famous for allowing this to occur). What a waste! If you're not sure where your home is leaking, contact a professional to do a Home Performance Assessment.

15 Clear your **A/C drain line (also called the P-trap)**. Your A/C unit removes moisture from your home in the summer. There is a drain by the indoor cooling coil, typically mounted above the furnace in the basement. If you flush 1 cup of chlorine bleach down your air conditioning drain and rinse it through with a gallon of water you can help keep your drain clear through the summer. Or consider adding an "E-Z Trap" to your system. This clear tubing allows you to see any potential blockages before water backs up into your system and provides easy access to clean the trap. Another option is a safety switch that will shut your air conditioning down in the event of water backup into the system. This can save a nasty surprise if the drain becomes blocked and overflows!

We hope you find these 15 tips helpful to keep your air conditioner running at peak performance through the warmer months! We would be happy to provide you with additional help to keep your cooling system working efficiently. Call us at (440) 248-2110, or visit us online at www.pkwadsworth.com if you have specific questions or have other heating and cooling needs.



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