

Summer Cooling Tips

ConnectEd provides information and support to help South Australian households understand and better manage their energy, water and telecommunications services.



1. Keep the sun out

Shade north and west facing windows and walls by growing shady trees, bushes or vines such as grapes, or with external awnings and blinds. Closing internal curtains and blinds will help, but external shade is more effective as it stops the sun's heat from getting inside.



2. Seal gaps but open up at night

Seal up gaps to reduce hot air coming in and cool air being lost. Close doors and windows during the day, but when the external temperature drops below the internal temperature of your house (such as at night), open doors and windows to let cool air in.



3. Fans and evaporative coolers

Ceiling or portable fans are the cheapest cooling appliances to run (2-5 ¢ per hour). Instead of cooling the air, they cool people by creating air movement.

Portable evaporative coolers are also quite cheap to run (about 7 ¢/hr). They cool the air by evaporation, so there is also a small cost for water used. Evaporative coolers work well in dry heat, but not so well when it's humid. Open some doors and/or windows in rooms where you want the cool air to flow.

The water tank inside the cooler needs to be refilled regularly. Whether it's every few hours or once a day depends on how big the tank is and how hot and dry the weather is. Don't run it on the "cool" setting without water as this could damage the water pump. You can however run it on the "fan only" setting without water.

Remember -- Always try to stay within the optimum temperature range 24-27°C on the thermostat: your air-con will work best and it will help keep down the running costs!



4. Air conditioners

Refrigerative air conditioners cool air in the room by extracting heat from it and pushing the heat outside. Reverse-cycle refrigerative air conditioners can heat as well as cool and this type of air conditioner can be very efficient and might be worth the extra cost. Only cool the rooms you need and, unlike evaporative cooling, keep doors and windows closed. Sealing up air leaks will reduce running costs. Four types are generally available:

- Portable air conditioners are the cheapest to buy but the least energy efficient (significant running cost for limited cooling effect). A venting kit installed through a window to outside is required and they can be quite noisy.
- Window-mounted units are the next cheapest to purchase and install with medium running costs but cooling only adequate for a single room.
- Split systems, with an internal cooling head and external unit, are quieter and usually more efficient than the other options. These air conditioners also have energy star rating labels:

To minimise running costs, buy the highest star rating you can afford. Running costs vary from about 25 ¢/hr for a small room up to 90 ¢/hr for a large open area.

- Whole-of-house ducted reverse-cycle systems are the most expensive to run, typically \$2 to \$3 per hour.



ConnectEd delivers information sessions and home energy assessments.

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