



Free your home from summer heat – and save some money too

The average American homeowner spends \$2,200 a year on utilities and half of this is for heating and cooling costs. Keep your costs down with this maintenance checklist:

For your AC unit

- Use a tarp, install a fence or plant some vines or shrubs to shade the unit.
- Clear the area within two feet of the unit of plants, grass and debris.
- Replace or clean washable air filters every month during the summer.
- Check the refrigerant – having too much or too little refrigerant will reduce the efficiency and life of the unit.
- Call a pro to tighten and lubricate all of the unit's moving parts – electrical connections, components and all.
- Clean evaporator and air conditioning coils.
- Have an older unit? Upgrade to an energy-efficient HVAC system. Check for state or local rebates.

For your home

- Install a programmable thermostat. Set it to 78 degrees when you're in the house and 85-88 degrees when you're out.
- Look into blower door testing and weatherization work to check if your home is keeping cool air inside. It's a waste to let that expensive air escape to the great outdoors.
- Ceilings fans are inexpensive, come in a variety of styles to suit your home and will make you feel five degrees cooler.
- Use natural light during the day if you can. Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent (CFL) bulbs, which cut energy use up to 12%.
- Save the energy-intensive chores for the coolest hours of the day.

Have a good summer and keep me in mind for all your real estate needs!