

How to Survive Summer Without Air Conditioning

We have five years experience living without AC in central Oklahoma. These suggestions are based on that experience. If you do have AC, these ideas will help you lower your air conditioning expense.

Stay hydrated. With or without AC. . . Drink at least a cup of water every 20-30 minutes during extreme heat periods in the summer, even if you aren't thirsty. Water or iced tea is generally better than soft drinks.

Cook outside. Keep all that heat & humidity outside of your house or apartment. Crock pots, electric skillet, hot plates, roaster ovens, and propane camp stoves work great for your "porch kitchen".

Dress for the season. Loose fitting clothes are cooler and more comfortable than tight fitting garments. Go barefoot or wear sandals. Natural fabrics are cooler than synthetics. At night, use light cotton bed sheets.

Keep cool with water! Douse your head, arms, & feet with cool water. Take a cool shower. Keep a spray bottle of water in the refrigerator, give yourself spritzes of cold water. Dip cloths in cold water & wrap around your neck, wrists, & ankles. Our "most fun" option: **go outside & douse everybody with a water hose.** During the hottest summer, we needed this at least once each hour during the day.

Use fans! Keep the air moving around inside. A fan blowing on you makes it seem like it is about 10 degrees cooler than the thermometer reads. This is especially effective when you are spritzing yourself with cold water. More fans are better than fewer. Use fans even if you have AC. You will need less AC!

Shade is your friend. Auto sun shades make cheap outdoor window shades. Duct tape several together so you cover the window. Hang them on the **outside** of the windows. Or tape aluminum foil to cardboard and cover the **outside** of your windows. Keep the heat off your windows – keep it out of the house. Curtains help. Vines like Morning Glories grow fast and shade your walls as good as a tree.

If you have no air conditioning, here's how to manage the heat: At night, *when it gets cooler outside than inside*, put box fans facing outside in the south and west windows to pull hot air out of the house. Put box fans facing inside your house in your north & east windows to draw in cooler air. Open every window and door to facilitate breezes. In the morning, **close your windows and doors when the temperature inside is the same as the temperature outside.** Shut your curtains. Put the outdoor shades on your windows. The temperature outside will increase faster than it does inside usually for several hours. But later in the day, the temperature inside will be the same as outside. **That's the time to open up and ventilate.** Day and night – use fans to keep the air moving around inside.

Minimize heat buildup inside the house:

- ✓ If you have a dishwasher, don't use the heat dry at the end of the cycle.
- ✓ Many electronic devices such as "instant on" televisions burn electricity all the time, and create heat all the time. Plug them into an electrical outlet strip and turn them off and on with the switch on the strip.
- ✓ Don't use the clothes dryer; hang your clothes on a line outside to dry.
- ✓ If you smoke, do so outside. (It would be better for you to quit.)
- ✓ Turn your computers off when they are not in use.
- ✓ **COOK OUTSIDE!** I know we already said this but it bears repeating. So – **COOK OUTSIDE!**
- ✓ Replace your incandescent lights with compact fluorescent bulbs or (best choice) LED bulbs.
- ✓ If you have AC . . . shade the outside parts of your air conditioner; it will work more efficiently.

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