



Energy Efficient Homes: Air Conditioning

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Welcome to the Florida summer!!! Feeling the heat? No pool to cool off in? Running your air conditioner and then feeling blue when the bill arrives? Let's review some basics in energy-efficient use of your air conditioner. Perhaps you and your family could make some small changes that could result in money being saved.

Quick Facts: Did you know that.....

- Heating, ventilation and air conditioning accounts for more than 40% of your utility bill.
- For every degree setting below 78°F, you spend up to 8% more in cooling costs.
- Upgrading your system can reduce your air conditioning costs by a significant amount. Is it time to consider doing so?

Short-term solutions to improve the efficiency of your existing system include.....

- Set your thermostat at 78° F or higher.
- Use bath and kitchen fans sparingly when the air conditioner is operating.
- Inspect and clean both the indoor and outdoor coils. The indoor coil in your air conditioner acts as a magnet for dust because it is constantly wetted during the cooling season. Dirt build-up on the indoor coil is the single most common cause of poor efficiency. The outdoor coil must also be checked periodically for dirt build-up and cleaned if necessary.
- Shade east and west window.
- Delay heat-generating activities, such as dishwashing and drying clothes in a clothes dryer, until the evening on hot days.
- Over most of the cooling season, keep the house closed tight during the day.
- Try not to use a dehumidifier at the same time your air conditioner is operating. It increases the cooling load and forces the air conditioner to work harder.
- Consider installing ceiling fans to circulate the air more effectively. The improved circulation will make you feel cooler.
- Install a programmable thermostat. You can then schedule the time blocks during which your heating or air-conditioning system operates. As a result, you can set the equipment to more economical settings—such as lower temperatures in winter while you are asleep or when you are away from home. Choose one that can store

and repeat multiple daily settings, so that you can have both a workday and a weekend heating/cooling time table.

We have such great resources from our UF/IFAS Specialists available to you. This article was adapted from an EDIS (Electronic Data Information Source) through the website www.edis.ifas.ufl.edu. Request the Brochure Number FCS3262. The publication includes information on terms to understanding that are used in the industry, how to purchase a new unit, and questions that you should be prepared to ask and answer when working with a HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning) representative. Contact your County Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent a call with further questions or for a copy of this brochure.