Tips for keeping your house cool in hot weather

1. Block the sun out

The radiation from the sun brings significant energy into the house through windows – whilst this might be useful in colder months it will increase the temperature markedly in summer. To counteract this happening keep curtains and blinds closed during the day especially on the south facing parts of your house but also on the east and west sides in the morning and evening respectively.

Tip: Thermal blinds and thicker curtain help keep heat in during the winter but also keep it out during hot weather.

2. Keep windows closed during the hottest part of the day

Just as you wouldn't leave windows open all day in winter keeping them closed during the hottest part of the day minimises the heat build-up in your home. For optimum cooling open doors and windows first thing in the morning and in the cooler evening period when the outside temperature is close to or below the internal temperature.

To maximise ventilation when your windows are open ensure you create a through draft by opening windows on opposite sides of the house and keeping internal doors open.

The most important time to keep your windows open is at night. This is when the air is coolest. Leaving some windows open while you sleep can also be a good way of cooling down the house at night.

3. Eat outside if you can - and don't use the oven

It is unpleasant to be stuck in a kitchen with the oven on, not when it feels like you're IN an oven already. Salads and cold meals are often more palatable in very hot weather.

4. Turn off unused appliances

Like ovens, other appliances around the house will generate unwanted heat in rooms during hot weather. Consider turning things like your TV, desktop computer and kitchen appliances off - don't just leave them on standby. This will stop them overheating and warming the rooms they are in.

Similarly, be mindful of charging things like your phone or tablet. These too give off heat, so it might be best to charge first thing in the morning when cooler.

5. Turn lights off and invest in energy-saving lightbulbs

Light bulbs are another source of heat in homes and should be kept off when trying to cool your house down. LED are a great investment for low energy lighting all year round.

6. Invest in some house plants

Plants act as natural air conditioners and generate moisture into the atmosphere through a process known as transpiration.

7. Use a fan to cool down a room

A fan blowing gently at you will keep you cool during the hot parts of the day and replace the breeze you would get from leaving your windows open (without the heating effect of letting in the hot mid-day air into your house). Note: most fans do not consume much energy but only run them when you really need to.

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At night or in the evening you might want to have a different strategy e.g. pointing your fan towards an open window. If you angle a fan towards a window, the fan will work to push out the warm air, allowing fresh air to come in another window and thereby cooling the room. Try to work with any prevailing wind direction rather than against it for maximum effect. An alternative is to leave your kitchen extractor fan running (i.e. a fan that expels air to the outside) to force some air to flow into the house.

8. Adjust your body temperature before bed with a cool shower

Before bed, put your wrists under the running cold tap and bathe your feet in cold water. Both of these will help lower your body temperature before turning in for the night.

If you're really hot, take a cool shower or even a cool bath to really cool yourself down.

It is important to drink plenty of water throughout the day but also keep an insulated bottle or flask of chilled water handy by the bed so you can take a sip if you feel hot during the night.