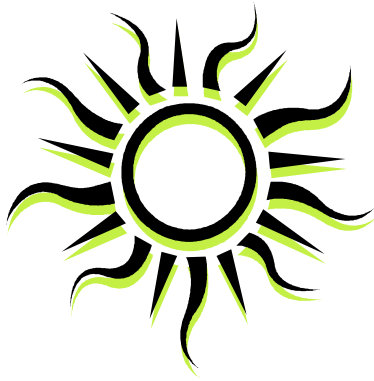


Keeping Cooler In Your House



One unpleasant experience of Summer is the relentless heat. And when you're at home, that heat can overpower the best efforts of your air-conditioning system. It might even make the inside of your house feel hotter than it is outside.

Several things that will help you stay cooler while in your home.

Use a slow-cooker for meals.

There are plenty of cookbooks and online sites with slow-cooker recipes to suit your family's tastes and needs. The slow-cooker is going to produce much less heat than either the stove or, especially, the oven. Plus – because the meal has been slow cooking all day, no prep work is needed when arriving home. Just dish out the good food, and enjoy the company of other family members or friends. Watch the sun set or watch the children play until you **know** they will be sleeping like logs. ~satisfied grin~

Use the microwave.

As with slow-cookers, microwaves produce less heat than stoves or ovens. An added benefit is that they cook faster, making it easy to have a spur-of-the-moment idea for dinner and not heat up the whole house. Again, no massive heat wave from cooking allows the family to enjoy the Summer evening instead of feeling heat-pressed and dragging.

Use your grill.

Pull out your grill and keep the heat outside. Marinate your food in the refrigerator during the day for tender and tasty food. (Use different marinades on the same type of meat to produce a variety of dishes throughout the week or the month.) While one or two people grill the food, the kids can be playing outside under watchful eyes. And how fun would it be to eat dinner at a picnic table during the Summer? Talk about casual meals and a **lot** of fun Summer memories. ~grin~

Make more meals that require no heating or re-heating.

Salads are probably one of the first foods you tend to think of for not having to cook. And while they can be healthy and can be varied greatly depending on the ingredients that you use, you might be bored with them by the end of the Summer. There are other non-cook foods out there – just do an internet search to find a treasure trove of recipes. And don't forget about foods that you may have cooked on another night that are good chilled, as leftovers.

The North side of a building is cooler.

For those of us in the Northern Hemisphere, the North side of our house is going to be naturally cooler because the sun is to our south. (Reversed for the folks down in the Southern Hemisphere.) If you have to spend a good portion of the day inside your home, a northern room will be the coolest place to be.

Ceiling fans.

Ceiling fans move the air and make you **feel** cooler even though the temperature in the room may be the same. It's the same principle as catching a breeze outside – the temperature is the same, but the moving air cools you down. Using a ceiling fan can allow you to turn on your air-conditioner at a later point in the year – or can keep you sane if you don't have a working air-conditioner. Using a ceiling fan while also using your air-conditioner allows you to set your air-conditioner at a higher temperature and still remain comfortable while saving electricity and money. Box fans and floor fans can provide some of the same benefit, but usually in a smaller area.

Open opposite windows.

Air flow helps to cool your home down. If there is any sort of breeze, open opposite line-of-sight windows. Not only will fresh (and typically cooler air) blow through, but the air flow will make you **feel** cooler as mentioned above. Or create your own breeze by placing a box fan in a window with the fan blowing to outside. Open windows in other areas of the house, especially if in line-of-sight. (Be sure to prop open any doors in between so they don't slam shut.) Facing the fan to outside ends up drawing air in through the other open windows and creates a breeze.

Attic fans.

Attic fans are something that I had not expected to see in any homes here in Central Florida – because our homes normally only have crawl spaces and not real attics. I have now had the experience with attic fans in two of our homes, including the one we currently live in. Not only are they great for getting odors out of the house quickly, but they are wonderful for bringing in cool air.

Shade your windows.

Windows on the Southern portion – including the Southeast and Southwest areas – of the house (Northern portion for those in the Southern Hemisphere) are bombarded by intense heat rays during the Summer. We've seen that heavy drapes inside your windows can keep some of the heat out of the room. But have you ever moved one of those drapes? The heat is mostly just sitting trapped between the drapes and the window. An even better way to block the heat is to shade your windows from the outside. If you are not fortunate to have an overhang wide enough to shade your windows, something as easy as putting inexpensive bamboo shades on the outside of the window will prevent a lot more of the heat from getting to the window. The shades can be rolled up after the sun starts going down so that you still have a great evening view.

Concrete walls are cooler.

While living in one of my college dorms, I discovered that concrete block walls keep the rooms cooler. Since our dorm air-conditioning was not always cooling well, this result of construction made it easier on us to keep cool. The concrete blocks seemed to absorb even the smallest amount of cool air and store it. At the beginning of the Fall term and near the end of the Spring term, we would frequently cool off by just leaning against one of the walls.

Tile floors are cooler.

If you are looking to buy a house, tile floors may be part of your purchase criteria if you live in a hotter climate. Or if it's time to re-do your floors, consider putting in a tile floor. As I have learned while living in our current home, tile floors are much cooler than any other type of floor upon which I have trod. The tile retains the cool air from your air-conditioner. And even

when heated (such as the sun shining directly on it), it stays cooler than other floor materials. I have to wear socks in the house year-round because our tile floors stay cold even in the hottest part of the Summer.

End shower with a quick cold rinse.

No matter what temperature you use for your shower, end your shower with a quick cold rinse. It doesn't have to be freezing cold, but it should be at least cool. And once you're into the hottest part of the Summer, you'll probably be asking your shower why it can't **make** the water colder. ~lol~ If you need more than just a quick cold rinse to cool off, stay longer under the cold water. By cooling your body off while still in the shower, you will feel cooler once you get out of the shower.

Turn on bathroom/shower exhaust fan.

Turning on your bathroom or shower exhaust fan **before** turning on the water for your shower will help draw out more of the hot, humid air that results from your shower. This along with the cold rinse mentioned above can really help you feel cooler once you get out of the shower.

And there are a number of other ideas that have probably occurred to you while reading this article. Even little changes can make big differences in the amount of heat in your home. Have fun this Summer, and keep cool!

About The Author

Marie Rice is the founder and editor of PartOfTheWhole.com - wellness for body, mind, and spirit. She enjoys helping others reach their goals. When she's not online, Marie's spending time with her family, gardening, doing crafts, or **most likely** – reading a book!

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