HOW TO SURVIVE A HEAT WAVE | SUMMER AIR CONDITIONING TIPS

　　The last five years were the hottest ever recorded and 2019 is on pace to continue the trend. And we’re already feeling it on the East Coast. Temperatures are going to reach into the 90s this week.

　　This means a much higher load and stress on your air conditioning unit. All air conditioning units require regular maintenance for the unit to function effectively and efficiently. Neglecting necessary maintenance ensures a steady decline in air conditioning performance while energy use steadily increases.

　　SUMMER AIR CONDITIONING TIPS TO SAVE MONEY AND ENERGY

　　CHANGE YOUR AIR FILTER

　　Dirty air filters compromise HVAC efficiency and lead to poor indoor air quality. Improve system efficiency and air quality by remembering to check you air filter every 30 days.

　　Make sure you have plenty of backup filters on hand. Look for higher MERV ratings for better filtration — just make sure it’s the right size so it will fit.

　　Follow manufacturer instructions for proper removal and replacement. The frequency of how often you should clean or replace air filters depends on your home, but don’t wait more than 3 months to accomplish this important home maintenance task.

　　CLEAN AIR CONDITIONER COILS

　　The air conditioner’s evaporator coil and condenser coil collect dirt over their months and years of service. A clean filter prevents the evaporator coil from getting dirty. Over time, the evaporator coil will still collect dirt. This dirt reduces airflow and insulates the coil, reducing its ability to absorb heat. To avoid this problem, check your evaporator coil every year and clean it as necessary.

　　Outdoor condenser coils can also become very dirty if the outdoor environment is dusty or if there is grass and foliage nearby. You can easily see the condenser coil and notice if dirt is collecting on its fins.

　　You should minimize dirt and debris near the condenser unit. Your dryer vents, falling leaves, and lawn mower are all potential sources of dirt and debris.

　　Cleaning the area around the coil, removing any debris and trimming foliage back at least 2 feet allows for adequate airflow around the condenser. If space permits, however, you can use trees, bushes, and walls to shade your unit for great energy efficiency. It’s best to have the condenser unit on the shady side of your home.

　　A certified HVAC technician can conduct a full inspection and cleaning of your air conditioning system; however, you can also do a DIY cleaning yourself. It won’t be as good, but it will definitely help! Just make sure the air conditioner is turned off at its source before you start the cleaning.

　　If you notice any bent condenser coil fins, you can try to straighten them with a condenser fin comb. Don’t use a crude object like a screwdriver or butter knife as some people may recommend. If there is extensive damage to the condenser fins, contact a professional HVAC technician.

　　WINDOW SEALS FOR ROOM AIR CONDITIONERS

　　If you have an air conditioner window unit, inspect the seal between the air conditioner and the window frame to ensure it makes contact with the unit’s metal case. Moisture can damage this seal, allowing cool air to escape from your house.

　　Also, go around your home and inspect the following areas for air leaks using an incense stick or light sheet of toilet paper:

　　•Dropped Ceiling

　　•Recessed Lights

　　•Attic Entrance

　　•Sill Plates

　　•Water and Furnace Flues

　　•All Air Ducts

　　•Door Frames

　　•Window Frames

　　•Chimney Flashing

　　•Outlets and Switches

　　•Plumbing and Utilities

　　Seal any leaks less than a quarter of an inch with weatherproof caulk and any gaps larger than that with expandable foam spray. Learn more about finding and sealing air leaks around your home.

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