

How to stay cool without air conditioning when your house is hot and the outdoors are closed

 edition.cnn.com/2020/05/24/health/how-to-stay-cool-without-air-conditioning-wellness/index.html

Being unable to afford air conditioning or wanting to save more by using it less is a normal circumstance for some of us.

Usually, in addition to using a few life hacks to stay cool, we would go see a movie, take a dip in the pool or visit an air-conditioned public facility to find some relief from hot summer temperatures.

But the pandemic has rendered those remedies inaccessible in many places. Many are closed for safety precautions, so when the heat becomes unbearable, it could feel like there's no place left to go.

However, there are ways to feel comfortable without cranking the air conditioning unit or going without. Here are more than 12 methods for cooling your body and buffering your house from the outside heat.

Stay hydrated

When you're hot and flushed, hydrating yourself is the first and foremost step to cooling down, said Wendell Porter, a senior lecturer in agricultural and biological engineering at the University of Florida.

The temperature of the water doesn't matter since your body will heat it, he added. If your body is suffering from the heat and needs to cool itself, it can't perform the function without enough moisture.

Take a cold shower or bath

Taking a cold shower or bath helps cool your body by lowering your core temperature. For an extra cool blast, use peppermint soap. The menthol in peppermint oil activates brain receptors that convey whether something you're eating or feeling is cold.

Use cold washrags on your neck or wrists

Place a cold washrag on your wrists or drape it around your neck to cool your body. These pulse points are areas where blood vessels are close to the skin, so you'll cool down more quickly.

Use box fans

Place box fans facing out of the windows of rooms you're spending time in to blow out hot air and replace it with cold air inside.

If the weather in your area tends to fall between 50 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit in the mornings and evenings, open the windows during those times to facilitate a cross-flow

ventilation system. The outdoors can pull the hot air from your home, leaving a cooler temperature or bringing in the breeze. Just be sure to close windows as the sun comes out, then open them when the weather is cool again.

Usually we might not leave windows open in consideration of crime, but while we're home during this time, this method could be feasible, Porter said.

Resting near a fan would reduce just your body temperature.

Close your curtains or blinds

If you have windows that face the sun's direction in the morning through afternoon, close the curtains or blinds over them to "keep the sun from coming directly into the house and heating up [the] inside," Porter said.

You could also install blackout curtains to insulate the room and reduce temperature increases that would happen during the day.

If you do turn the air conditioning on, don't drop it to below 70 degrees Fahrenheit in an effort to cool the house faster, said Samantha Hall, managing director of Spaces Alive, a design research company helping to create healthy, sustainable buildings.

"It just runs for longer to reach that temp and will keep going until you start to feel a bit chilly and is then hard to balance," she added. Instead, keep the unit temperature as high as possible while still comfortable.

Sleep in breathable linens

Cotton is one of the most breathable materials, so cotton sheets or blankets could help keep you cool through the night.

The lower the thread count of the cotton, the more breathable it is, Porter said. That's because higher thread counts have more weaving per square inch.

Sleep in the basement

If you can't sleep through the night because you're too hot, you may not have to stay in your bedroom. Heat rises, so if you have a lower or basement level in your home, set up a temporary sleeping area there to experience cooler temperatures at night.

Don't refrigerate or freeze blankets or clothing

Common advice for staying cool without air conditioning includes refrigerating or freezing wet socks, blankets or clothing then ringing them out for sleep. But this isn't a good idea, Porter said.

Summer is not completely canceled. Here are 100 things we can do with or without kids.

"The amount of energy they can absorb from your body that night, they will be warm in just a matter of minutes," he said. "And then you'd have damp stuff that would mold your mattress. So you definitely don't want to do that."

Close the doors of unused rooms

If no one's using a room, close it off to keep the cool air in only occupied areas of the house.

Use the exhaust fan in your kitchen and/or bathroom

Flip the switch for the exhaust fan in your kitchen to pull hot air that rises after you cook or in your bathroom to draw out steam after you shower.

Install energy-efficient light bulbs

Incandescent light bulbs generate a higher temperature than LED light bulbs do. To make the switch, watch for sales on energy-efficient bulbs then slowly replace the bulbs in your house, Porter said.

Switching light bulbs can save money but won't reduce a lot of heat in the home, Hall said. But if you focus on switching the bulbs in areas you're sitting near, that would make a more noticeable difference, Porter said.

Cook in the morning, with a slow cooker or outside

Oven heat can spread throughout your house. Keep the heat centralized in one area, such as a slow cooker. Or, cook outdoors on a grill to keep the heat outside.

Enjoy frozen treats

Eating an ice pop or ice cream to cool down may help for a moment. But don't go overboard on the sugar if you're overheated or at risk of being overheated, Porter said. "Sugar would run your metabolism up and you'd start feeling internally hot," he said. "So the cool treat might be good, but the extra sugar might not."

Research what your state offers

If you've tried everything and still can't beat the heat at home, you could look online for any local programs that are offering ductless air conditioners.

Depending on your state, some cooling centers may be open and taking precautions to ensure they're as safe as possible. You could start by checking with your local utility offices, as they would know who is offering certain programs, Porter recommended.