

## Q "How can I stay cool without spending a bundle on air conditioning?"

Good news: As the summer heat revs up, it doesn't mean you also have to rev up your air conditioning (and energy bill)! In fact, with a few simple tweaks to your daily routine, say these top energy and health experts, you can stay cool as a cucumber on the hottest days—without taking a big bite out of your budget!

**Did you know?**  
A recent study revealed that Americans spend an average of \$22 billion a year on home air conditioning!



### 1 Get the most from your AC!



Here's how to keep the AC on the lowest setting and still be comfy even on the hottest days, says energy expert Christina Kielich.

#### Trying the shrubbery trick!

Though landscaping to shade your entire home from the sun is a great way to keep it cool for less, it can cost thousands. Instead, try planting a few inexpensive low shrubs to shield only the air conditioning unit. This trick will actually boost the unit's efficiency by 10%, says Kielich—and drop your energy bill by the same amount!

#### Cleaning house at this time!

Dishwashers, washers, dryers and vacuums all give off enough heat to make your air conditioning work 10% harder, says Kielich. Use them when your house is naturally cooler—first thing in the morning or after dark—and the extra heat won't kick the AC into overdrive.

#### Swapping your light source!

Not only do compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) use about 75% less energy than traditional bulbs, but they also give off 75% less heat, says Kielich. Make the switch, and your AC won't have to work as hard—saving you about \$40 in cooling costs over the lifetime of just one bulb!

#### Cracking an attic window!

The hottest air in your home is on this upper level—and it can often seep lower into your living space, says Kielich. By cracking a window, you can lower the attic temperature—even a few degrees is enough to help reduce the stifling air that heats up the rest of your home.

### 2 Easy DIY ways to beat the heat!

Make these tiny changes to your everyday routine, and it'll be a breeze to stay cool, promises wellness expert Peggy Hall. She suggests:

#### Working out the smart way!

Surprising research now reveals that doing yoga can lower your body temperature by one or two degrees! So on the hottest days, try 10 minutes of yoga in the morning and evening.

#### Hopping in a cool—not cold—shower!

Cold water actually boosts circulation, which increases body temperature, says Hall. Instead, opt for more tepid water that feels just slightly cooler than your skin.



#### Powering up your pressure points!

Instead of pressing ice on the pressure points inside each wrist, the nape of the neck or behind each knee, dab Tiger Balm on these spots! The menthol in the balm enhances the cooling effect.

### 3 Menu dos & don'ts for chilling out!

Certain foods cool you off—while others can heat you up, say Hall and Jennifer Workman, M.S., R.D. They advise:

#### Noshing on nachos!

Just make sure they're loaded with jalapeños—the spicier, the better! Eating hot foods makes



you sweat—and when the sweat evaporates on your skin, it instantly cools you down, says Hall. It's no coincidence that the traditional cuisine of folks living in hot climates is full of spicy foods!

#### Skipping sweet treats!

Sugary drinks and processed sweets such as doughnuts and pastries spike insulin levels. The result: You feel hungrier and are more likely to reach for high-calorie foods, which boost body temperature because your body has to work harder to process them.

#### Eating less, more often!

Having a big meal also heats up your body, especially if you eat a lot of red meat or fatty or starchy foods, which take longer to digest, says Workman. Think of your body as a campfire—the more wood you add, the hotter it burns! So stick to small meals more often, and easier-to-digest foods with a high water content—like salads, fruit and fish.

—Marina Khidekel

### Our expert panel



**Christina Kielich** is a U.S. Department of Energy spokesperson on energy efficiency issues. She's offered energy advice in publications including *The Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes*, *Consumer Reports* and *The New York Times*.



Wellness, lifestyle and certified yoga instructor **Peggy Hall** is a contributing editor at *Clean Eating* magazine and has a weekly health and wellness segment on the ABC Radio Network. She's also been quoted in *USA Today* and the *Los Angeles Times*.



Dietitian **Jennifer Workman, M.S., R.D.**, is a continuing education provider for the American Dietetic Association. She's also the author of *Stop Your Cravings: A Balanced Approach to Burning Fat, Increasing Energy, and Reducing Stress*.