

Center for Earth Leadership



The increased use of air conditioners pushes peak power demand to high levels. Fortunately, there are ways to keep cool without stressing the planet. Read more. . .

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Keeping Cool without Stressing the Planet

Why we care

It's HOT out there! Rising summer temperatures and the growing prevalence of air conditioning in the Northwest mean that energy demand, which historically peaks in winter, is now growing faster in the summer. Beyond increasing demand on the power grid, air conditioners add to fossil fuel use and may contain refrigerants that contribute to climate change. Fortunately, there are ways to keep cool without stressing the planet.

Simple, positive change

- Install an Energy Star ceiling fan to create breezes.
- Open windows on opposite sides of the house during the cool part of the day and seal off the house during the hottest times. Close draperies or shades on windows that are exposed to sun.
- Save heat-producing tasks such as showering, cooking, and doing laundry for cooler parts of the day.
- Upgrade insulation, weather stripping, and caulking to keep summer heat outside.
- Shade your home with awnings, louvers, trees, or solar shade film on windows. Shading can reduce indoor temperatures by as much as 20 degrees.
- Consider a [whole-house fan](#), which can use less energy than a central air conditioner.
- If you have an air conditioner, use it in combination with a fan to lessen its workload, and set the temperature above 78° when away from home.
- If you do purchase a [room air conditioner](#) or [central air conditioner](#), assure that it has an Energy Star label and is sized properly. In some cases, a [ductless heat pump](#) is the best choice.

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.