

# Hot ideas to help stay cool

By Alison Ashton  
Copley News Service

As temperatures rise, home owners start thinking of economical ways to cool hot, stuffy rooms.

Some home-cooling methods are affordable and easy for the do-it-yourselfer to install. Other methods, such as air-conditioning units, are somewhat costlier and require more planning.

Awnings are especially affordable and effective. Install them on windows facing east, west and south. Reducing the intake of heat through windows, awnings work best in white or light colors to reflect the sun.

Shop for retractable or removable awnings to remove during

cool-weather months, when you want the house to catch as much sunlight as possible.

You also can reduce heat intake through windows with specially tinted or coated glass. And don't overlook something as simple as heavy shades or drapes to block the heat.

Fans are another mainstay of hot-weather months.

Whole-house fans are used to ventilate the entire house by sending hot air out through vents in the attic while drawing cool air in through open windows.

Ceiling fans have made a comeback as home-cooling devices and important decorating accessories. They circulate cool air throughout a room, and can help an air condi-

tioner work more efficiently.

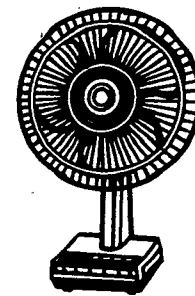
You will find ceiling fans in sleek, high-tech designs, country-style brass and oak or in simple cool white, which looks particularly refreshing when temperatures rise.

When the weather is humid and unbearable, nothing works better than an air conditioner. They are so effective that 60 percent of all homes boast a window-mounted or central air-conditioning system.

Central air-conditioning, like central heating, works throughout the house. It is quiet, but can be expensive to install and run if you are cooling rooms that are hardly used.

Window units are the most popular because they are more affordable. Moreover, a competent do-it-yourselfer can install a window unit in a day.

The main drawbacks to window units are that they can be noisy and can only cool one room. Be-



fore purchasing a unit, calculate the room's square footage. An air conditioner that is too small runs non-stop without really doing the job, while one that is too big shuts off before it lowers the room's humidity level.

If you opt for a window-mounted air conditioner, here are some tips to keep it running smoothly:

- Clean filters and intake areas monthly.
- Seal around the window (or wall, for wall-mounted units).
- Protect it on the outside by mounting it in a low-traffic area. If your air conditioner faces a backyard full of playful dogs, kids and flying objects, it is more likely to be damaged.

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