

U.S. Department of Energy - Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
A Consumer's Guide to Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
Avoiding Heat Buildup

To avoid heat buildup in your home, plan ahead by landscaping your lot to shade your house. If you replace your roof, use a light-colored material to help it reflect heat. Insulate your house to at least the recommended levels to help keep out the heat, and consider using a radiant barrier.

On hot days, whenever outdoor temperatures are higher than the temperature inside your house, close tightly all the windows and exterior doors. Also install window shades or other window treatments and close the shades. Shades will help block out not only direct sunlight, but also radiated heat from the outdoors, and insulated shades will reduce the conduction of heat into your home through your windows.

Cooking can be a major source of heat within a home. On hot days, avoid using the oven; cook on the stovetop, or better yet, use only a microwave oven. For stovetop or oven cooking, use the spot ventilation of your oven hood to help remove the heat from the house (this will suck some hot outside air into your home, so don't overdo it). Outdoor grilling is a great way to avoid cooking indoors, and of course, going out to eat or ordering take-out work as well.

Bathing, washing laundry, and other activities can also pump heat into your home. When you shower or take a bath, use the spot ventilation of a bathroom fan to remove the heat and humidity from your home. Your laundry room might also benefit from spot ventilation. If you use an electric dryer, be sure it's vented to the outside (for safety, gas dryers should ALWAYS be vented to the outside). If you live in an older home with a sump that your laundry drains to, drain the sump after running any loads in hot water (or better yet, avoid using hot water for your laundry).

Finally, avoid any activities that generate a lot of heat, such as running a computer, burning open flames, running a dishwasher, and using hot devices such as curling irons or hair dryers. Even stereos and televisions will add some heat to your home.