



INTRODUCTION

We've got through the winter, heating our homes to keep us warm, dry and comfortable but as we come into summer we no longer need the comforts of heating but rather cooling. This guide provides some easy advice of what you can do to keep your home or rental property comfortable over the summer months.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO PLAN AHEAD FOR SUMMER?

We know how to protect ourselves from the elements, whether it be rain, wind or sun. But what happens to our home when the seasons change, and how do we keep our house protected too?

Just like any season we plan ahead. In winter we buy merino socks, and throw an extra blanket on the bed. In summer we change the wardrobe from winter coats to summer shorts and dresses. Similarly with our house, before winter hits we make plans for installation of heat pumps or additional heating, and we ensure we have adequate ventilation etc.

The same applies for summer. We need to cool our home down so we can live comfortably through the warmer months - and before it gets too hot and our home struggles to perform as it should or could, we plan ahead!

FOR HOUSE OWNERS

BALANCED VENTILATION SYSTEM WITH HEAT RECOVERY

Think about getting a balanced ventilation system with heat recovery. Spring/summer is probably the best time to install it, because most people only think about ventilation in the fall and winter. During the summer, the ventilation system will allow you keep your windows closed while keeping the inside comfortable if you want to keep out dust, bugs, pollen, or rain. And in the winter, it'll save you money on heating as well. Some people might say that you don't *need* balanced ventilation and heat recovery if you're adding ventilation to an older house. And they are correct in that it isn't required, but if you're already spending thousands of dollars on a ventilation system, you might as well get one that is very energy efficient, and will only increase in efficiency as you continue to upgrade your house. An attic air positive pressure system becomes risky if you increase insulation and airtightness.

INSULATION

Think about adding some insulation to the walls or replacing the windows. Summer is the best time to do it, as the weather is usually more cooperative. If you have good ventilation through the house adding insulation and better windows will keep the house cooler during the summer the same way it keeps it warmer in the winter.

SOLAR PANELS

Think about adding some solar panels with a battery to reduce electricity usage.

INSPECT AND MAINTAIN YOUR HOUSE

Inspect your home, give it a wash, and fix problems that you notice! Branches and leaves build up in gutters and dirt and green growth tend to build up during the humid winters, so keeping your house clean will keep it more durable. You should also fix any cracks, failed sealant, peeling paint, holes, etc. as soon as you find them. The durability of the assembly relies on maintenance. If you leave the problems until they're huge and unsightly, you're allowing the rest of the cladding, roofing, foundation or whatever else to continue deteriorating, possibly causing deeper issues that are much more difficult and expensive to repair.

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SOLAR SHADING TO PREVENT OVERHEATING

Think about adding some permanent solar shading to prevent overheating. No one likes a lounge area with a beautiful view that is absolutely unbearable during the day because of the sun, so add a hat or some sunscreen to your windows. Depending on the look and functionality you want, there are a few options:

1. TINT/LOW E COATING ON WINDOWS

If you're installing new windows or new double glazing, get them with a low E coating to keep the sun a bit cooler in the summer, and to trap more heat inside in the winter. There are different strengths of coating Shading Coefficient (SC) or Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) is almost like Sun Protection Factor SPF for sunscreen. With SC/SHGC the lower the number (e.g. SC 0.45), the more protection the coating provides, whereas with SPF, the higher number (e.g. SPF 50) means more protection. Low E coatings block the heat from the sun but still look clear, whereas a tint on the window will provide the same protection, but it looks much darker. Films to apply to an existing window tend to be tints, whereas new windows usually use Low E.

2. EXTERNAL SHADES / CANOPIES

There are many decorative awnings or fabric shades or canopies that can be installed above or near a window. To make them effective, the sun should be blocked when it's high in the sky and allowed in when it is low. This may require a solar study on your house, or if you generally know where the sun hits you can set up a canopy to test things out at different times of day and different times of year.

3. TREES/PLANTS

Landscaping can be used very effectively for shading and decoration.

5. EXTERNAL SHUTTERS

In Europe, external roller shutters tend to be popular, as they are fully adjustable and they also provide security. In North America, swing shutters tend to be popular even as decoration. Sliding shutters seem to be gaining popularity in NZ. All work well, as they block the sun at the exterior of the house rather than heating up interior blinds.

6. ELECTROCHROMIC GLASS

Switches from transparent to tinted to opaque at the flip of a switch. It can achieve a very sleek and modern look, but tends to be costly.

FOR APARTMENT OWNERS

Due to body corporate rules, you may not be allowed to make heaps of changes, but it's worth checking or asking if you can do any of the ones listed for house owners. You might think you can't add a ventilation system, but there are a few units available in NZ that fit in the cabinet space right above the range hood, which work very well in apartments. Apartments especially benefit from ventilation systems because they tend to lack cross-flow for window ventilation, and they tend to be located in dirtier, noisier environments which mean an occupant would want to keep their windows closed. Check your doors and windows and see if you can seal up any leaks.

FOR RENTERS

FANS

Buy some fans! They'll all help, but the one we like best is a 30 cm x 30cm box fan, because it's easy to set it up in a window or door and move a lot of air in or out of the house for cooling.

SUNSHADES

Buy some sunshades or mesh or plants for your windows! The key is finding something that can be easily installed and removed without damage. Blocking some sun from the OUTSIDE rather than with blinds on the inside, keeps you cooler, because the blinds heat up and if you're next to them, you'll still feel it.

STOPPERS AND SCREENS

Buy some stoppers and screens to keep the doors open for cross flow ventilation and screens to keep the buggies out.

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