

Air Conditioner Tuneups: Reduce Your Bills, Save Your System

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The average household spends more than \$2,200 a year on energy bills, with nearly half of this going to heating and cooling costs. In this present economy, any kind of savings is good for everyone. Most of our energy expense comes from electricity consumption. During summer or winter, there are several ways to avoid higher bills and stress. Moderate settings are an important way to lower bills, but maintenance, regular tune-ups and little changes in the air-conditioning system can improve your results.

These general guidelines will provide efficiency, lower consumption and bills.

Maintenance check up by a technician: An annual checkup through a technician will include tightening electrical connections, lubricating moving parts, checking and inspecting the condensate drain in central air-conditioner and checking the controls of the system. During summer, cleaning evaporator and condenser air conditioning coils are essential as dirty coils reduce the system's ability to cool your home increasing energy costs. Clean and adjust blower components since airflow problems can reduce system's efficiency by up to 15 percent. Checking the refrigerant level helps to improve the efficiency of your system. During winter, checking all gas (or oil) connections, gas pressure, burner combustion and heat exchange helps not only in energy consumption and efficiency but also prevents fire hazards.

Check thermostat settings, leaks and air filters: Set your thermostat between 78 and 82 degrees F during hot weather and between 68 and 70 degrees F during cool weather. Raising your thermostat setting and using fans during summer can make you feel 4 to 6 degrees cooler. During winter, opening south and west-facing blinds let the sunlight in, decreasing the load of over-running the compressor.. Changing the temperature settings frequently does not immediately heat or cool, instead excess energy gets consumed leading to overloading the system and higher costs. Programmable thermostats are a solution to this problem. Using draperies even if you have window blinds prevents outside heat helping the system to have a longer life. Inspecting, cleaning, and changing air filters once a month in your central air conditioner, furnace, and/or heat pump is essential for all homes and apartments. A dirty filter can increase energy costs and damage your equipment, leading to early failure. Check for leaks and keep windows and doors closed when your AC is running.

Tuning up your air-conditioning system each year, whether in an apartment or in an individual house, will ensure cost savings in your equipment and energy bills.