

# Chelsea's Tips to Keep Your Home Cool and Energy Efficient

By Thomas Boni | Jul. 13th, 2021

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Energy bills often spike in the summer and winter when it's really hot or really cold outside — and your heating and cooling system has to work overtime to keep you comfortable.

But you can lower those bills by choosing the right HVAC system and regularly maintaining it. Here's advice from "Today's Homeowner" co-host **Chelsea Lipford Wolf**.

**How do you keep your home energy-efficient in the hot summer months?**

We keep our A/C running! Contrary to popular belief, you want to keep your home semi-cooled during the day while you're away.

When the unit works during the day, it doesn't need to make up for lost time when you get home at 5 o'clock and try to cool your house by 10 or 15 degrees.

Aside from that, we close our drapes while the sun is out and we're away from the house. That way, it doesn't heat up the inside of our house as much.





*Workers deliver Chelsea's new American Standard Platinum Series Heat Pump to her home.*

**You just had a new HVAC unit installed at your house. Tell us about it!**

That's right! We just installed a [\*\*Platinum Series Heat Pump\*\*](#) from American Standard Heating & Air Conditioning. We selected it because it has highly efficient AccuComfort variable speed technology.

**Variable speed...?**

Our variable speed American Standard unit selects from one of 750 speeds to maintain our home's temperature set point within  $\frac{1}{2}$  a degree.

That means when you're cooling your house just a few degrees at a time, your HVAC unit will run at a lower speed, using less energy to maintain the same temperature and comfort level.

If your house needs to cool a lot or get rid of a lot of humidity all at once, then it can speed up.

Best of all, our unit does it on its own! It changes the speed based on the settings in our [\*\*AccuLink Platinum 1050 Control smart thermostat\*\*](#).

And that thermostat travels with us! I can control it with my phone or tablet, whether I'm at home or on the go — so my family is comfortable at all times.



*Variable-speed heating and cooling systems are optimized to use just the energy necessary to meet your comfort settings.*

**Got it. But keeping the A/C on constantly — doesn't that use more energy?**

Not at all! In fact, [according to the U.S. Department of Energy](#), operating fan motors at lower speeds for longer periods of time can lead to energy savings.

That's why AccuComfort's variable-speed technology is my favorite feature of our new unit. It's more energy efficient. Sure, it's always on, but to a lesser degree — and you don't even know the A/C is on sometimes because it's at such a low stage!

**Ah, that makes sense. Speaking of 'cents,' homeowners want to get the most life out of their HVAC unit — stretch their dollar farther. How can they do that?**

It boils down to one thing: regular maintenance! There are some things that you can do yourself, and there are other things that really need a professional touch.

Let's start with the things you can do yourself: clean out your A/C condensation line with bleach twice a year and change out your air filters (or clean reusable filters) every three months. That way, your HVAC isn't working hard to push air through a dirty filter.

We have a recurring event on our family calendar to remind us to wash out our filter every three months. Just set a reminder on your phone or on a family chores calendar so you actually do it!



Regular HVAC tune-ups are worth the cost. Certified HVAC technicians can run tests and make adjustments to ensure the unit runs at optimal efficiency.

Finally, get regular tune-ups from a certified HVAC dealer. This may cost \$100 or so, but it's worth it! The technician can test the thermostat and settings, lubricate the system's parts, check and straighten the unit's fins, and adjust the blower motor.

Most homeowners can't do these things or don't want to do them, and they're very important to ensure the unit runs efficiently.

**Great tips! Finally, every HVAC unit eventually needs replacement, and that's a pretty big investment ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000. How do you find the best HVAC unit?**

Definitely request a Manual J load calculation. That's just a fancy name for how the pros determine how much heating and cooling a home needs to keep the people inside it nice and comfortable.

That amount may change over the years, even if you stay in the same home. If you've updated some windows, closed them off, or added insulation, it will affect how much heating and cooling your home needs.

Working with trained technicians such as American Standard Customer Care Dealers can help ensure you get the right HVAC system.

**Manual J load — got it. Anything else we should know?**

Definitely consider which unit you can afford based on its [Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio](#), which measures air conditioner efficiency. The SEER is determined by dividing the amount of cooling output, measured in BTUs, by the total electric energy input, measured in watt-hours.

You should get the unit with the highest SEER that you can afford because that's going to save you energy costs during the life of that unit.

**Awesome! Thanks for these tips, Chelsea.**

Anytime! I hope everyone stays cool out there!

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<https://todayshomeowner.com/seasonal/guides/chelsea-lipford-wolfs-tips-to-keep-your-home-cool-during-summer-months/>