

Living with a Heat Pump



Heat pumps offer efficient, clean, and even comfort. Here are a few tips to get the most out of your heat pump:



Thermostat Settings

- **SET FOR COMFORT.** Do you have a wall-mounted heat pump air handler? Because hot air rises and heat pumps measure temperature at the indoor units (which are closer to the ceiling), you may find you need to set your heat pump at a different temperature than you're used to with a traditional system.
- **AVOID "AUTO" MODE ON HOT AND COLD DAYS.** The "Auto" mode on heat pumps allows the heat pump to decide whether to heat or cool the space, but this isn't the most efficient setting for all circumstances. To avoid accidentally air conditioning on a midwinter sunny day, for example, use "Heat" mode, not "Auto." Likewise, to avoid accidentally heating on a cool summer night, use "Cool" "Dry," or "Fan," not "Auto" in the summer.
- **SET IT AND FORGET IT IN THE WINTER.** Heat pumps operate most efficiently when holding a steady temperature. Turning a heat pump down when you're away or asleep may actually use more energy than leaving it on — because it has to work harder to come back to the desired temperature than it does to maintain it. Set your heat pump at a comfortable temperature and forget it. An air-tight and insulated building enclosure will make it even more efficient!
- **MATCH THE SUMMER MODE TO THE WEATHER AND YOUR NEEDS.** There are three heat pump modes for cooling. "Fan" mode uses the least energy and may suffice when you need a little relief, but be sure to turn it off when you leave since it will not cool the room. "Cool" mode is the best choice for lowering the temperature and may suit the hottest days.
- **OPTIMIZE FAN SPEED.** If your unit has adjustable fan settings, seasonal adjustments to the fan speed, will help you optimize comfort and do a better job of mixing the air in your home. Maintaining temperatures on mild days typically works best with "Auto Fan" mode.



Use

- **USE YOUR HEAT PUMP ALL WINTER.** High-performance heat pumps are the most efficient heating system, even on the coldest winter day. If you have both a heat pump and a boiler or furnace, your heat pump is the more energy-efficient choice.
- **USE YOUR HEAT PUMP BEFORE YOUR BOILER OR FURNACE.** For homes heated by both a heat pump and a boiler or furnace, relying on the heat pump whenever possible will maximize savings. This can mean different things in different homes, like setting the boiler or furnace thermostat lower or closing the fuel-based heat source.
- **UNDERSTAND HEATING.** A heat pump does not operate like a gas furnace. The temperature of heated air from a heat pump is around 90 degrees, which is lower than human body temperature. As such, it may feel like cool air is coming out of the register, but it really isn't — it's just cooler than your body temperature. The room itself should be as warm as you set the temperature for.
- **IF YOU HAVE A DUAL SYSTEM, DON'T LEAVE YOUR EXISTING HEATING SYSTEM CRANKED UP.** If you still have a gas furnace in your home, leave it off unless your heat pump is struggling to provide sufficient heat. In some systems, this may be automatic.



Maintenance

- **CLEAN YOUR AIR FILTERS.** Heat pumps work best when air filters are clean. Vacuum or rinse the air filters whenever they become visibly dirty or when the indicator light comes on. The frequency of cleaning can range from weeks to months depending on use and dust volume. For details on how to take the filters out, consult your user manual.
- **KEEP YOUR OUTDOOR UNIT CLEAR.** Keep shrubs away from outdoor units and remove leaves that may become stuck in them, being careful not to bend the fins. If you live in an area where there may be colder weather, heat pumps will automatically defrost.
- **HAVE YOUR HEAT PUMP PROFESSIONALLY SERVICED.** Unlike a traditional HVAC system, heat pumps may not require two services a year. To ensure peak performance, follow manufacturers' recommendations for professional service in addition to regular filter cleaning. Servicing your heat pump in the fall or spring is best. Contact your installer for more details.

Please note that your local utility may have special rates for heat pump water heaters. Check the website of your utility to learn more about any local utility offerings.