

## LOWERING ENERGY USE, THE LAZY WAY

As no doubt, you are aware, in Alice Springs the heat is the topic of many conversations. As an Alice Springs, local, I usually roll my eyes when people lament about the heat. One of my friends summed it up nicely: “I’m tired of hearing people talk about the weather. It’s hot in the summer and cold in the winter. Welcome to Earth.”

Below I’ll provide some tips to help you lower your energy use, the lazy way.

Jack Page, Director **Exact Homes**

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### LOWERING ENERGY USE, THE LAZY WAY

**Seal up the house** I’m sure we have money leaking through cracks around the doors and windows. It’s simple enough to buy caulk and weather-stripping to seal cracks — in fact, we already have caulk left over from other projects. Per Consumer Reports, sealing leaks can reduce energy costs by 15 to 30%

**Use heat-generating appliances at night.** I know this should be a no-brainer, but I like to bake, and because I work at home, I can bake whenever the mood strikes. But obviously, a hot oven in the heat of the day forces the AC to work harder to keep the house at a comfortable temperature. The same goes for clothes dryers and dishwashers. Use these at night when outside temps are cooler

**Wash laundry with cold water.** According to Michael Bluejay, A.K.A. Mr. Electricity, washing clothing in cold water instead of hot can save you significant power costs

**Go retro with a crock-pot.** Speaking of ovens, there’s nothing that heats up our house faster than a preheating oven and a few pans on the stove top. Slow cookers, on the other hand, use less energy and won’t turn your kitchen into, well, an oven. I think the crock pot often gets a bad rap thanks to the old way of slow cooking: bland recipes created from canned and pre-packaged ingredients. But the slow cooker is enjoying a quiet revival

**Turn on fans.** Fans make a room feel cooler, and the one in our living room quit working weeks ago. We need to fix it.

**Unplug electronics.** I know, I know. It should go without saying. I seem to forget about phone chargers and camera battery chargers, though. Because of this, they stay plugged in, sucking change from our bank account. By using power strips, I could shut off electricity to these devices all at once.

**Consider your light bulbs.** Bluejay says you can turn off lights you aren’t using to save \$274 a year; turn off a single 100-watt light bulb from running constantly to save \$131 per year; and replace ten 60-watt light bulbs with compact fluorescents to save \$123 per year (upfront cost estimate: \$32).

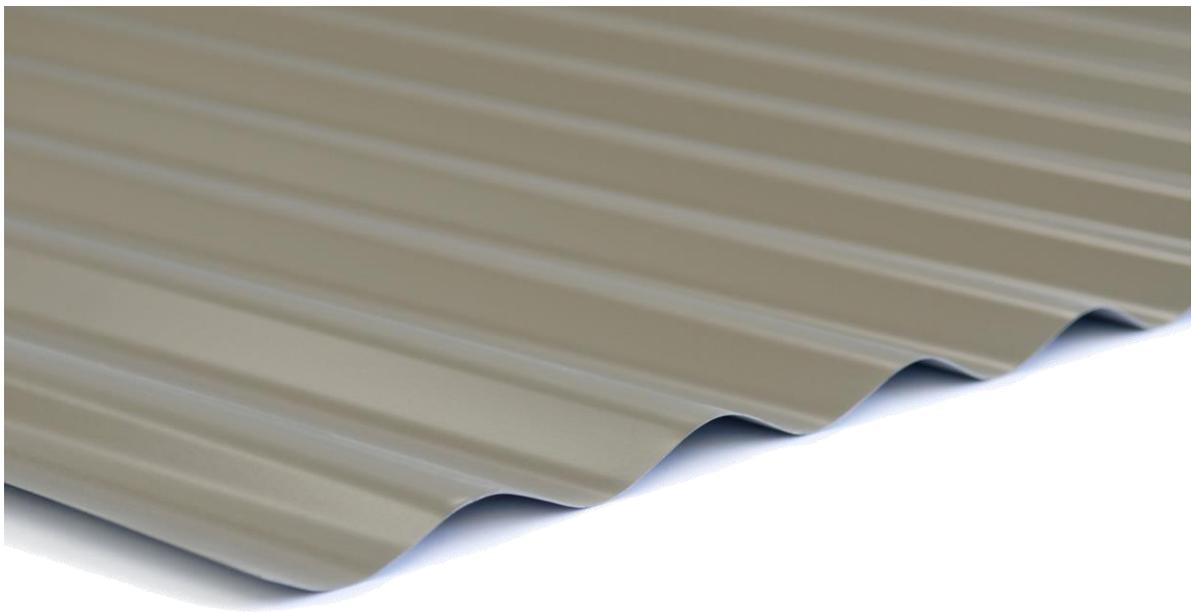
**Don't cool an empty house.** If you have a programmable thermostat, program it! We don't have one, which means I must make it a habit to raise the thermostat when I do leave the house. Close off rooms you aren't occupying, as well.

**Replace air filters monthly.** We're pretty good at replacing our filter, but we could be more diligent. Dirty filters restrict airflow, causing the AC system to run longer and use more energy. I've added a recurring task to my calendar to make sure the air filter gets replaced each month.

These tasks should add up to noticeable savings and don't require much time or money. (Fingers crossed that ceiling fan will be an easy fix!) Once I've taken these steps, maybe I'll be ready for more. For now, it's much too hot to think about new appliances, insulation, and replacing windows combine with salt and pollution on the surface, resulting in accelerated corrosion.

Wash areas that are not naturally cleaned by rain with fresh, clean water. It is recommended that you clean the surface as often as you would wash your car to maintain its duco. In marine or industrial environments, you should wash more often. Maintenance must be frequent enough to prevent dust, salts, pollutants and any other material to accumulate on the product and reduce its life.

If washing with clean water does not completely clean the surface, a mild solution of detergent should be added to the water and applied with a soft bristled nylon brush. Rinse the coloured surface thoroughly. Never use abrasive or solvent based cleaners such as turps, petrol or kerosene.



## AIRCONDITIONER

### OPERATING TIPS FOR EXTREME WEATHER

Always test run your air conditioner a few weeks before the start of summer or winter and make sure it is cooling or heating sufficiently. If the air conditioner needs servicing, it is advised that you do this before the summer or winter season arrives.

#### ON A HOT DAY YOU WILL NEED TO:

- Follow any conditions specified in the installer's quotation.
- Always start the air conditioner early in the morning and keep the house/office cool. If you try and start the air conditioner in the afternoon when the house/office is already very hot, it may take a while to cool down.
- Keep outside doors and windows closed.
- Keep doors to unconditioned areas (eg laundries, bathrooms etc.) closed.
- Note that any doorways on the return air path will need to be kept open, which may mean that doors to an unconditioned hallway will need to be kept open.
- Keep windows, which are exposed to the sun, shaded preferably externally (e.g. shutters), but alternatively by internal blinds or curtains.
- Only switch on the maximum zones specified in the quotation. Switch off other zones. If your installer/dealer has not specified what area they have allowed for, then they have probably only allowed for the main living area. Seek advice from installer/dealer.
- Operate the fan on high speed. On humid days a low fan speed may be more comfortable.

NOTE: Always allow the necessary amount of fresh air into rooms.

#### ON A COLD DAY YOU WILL NEED TO:

- Follow any conditions specified in the installer's quotation.
- You can leave air conditioner running overnight, but lower the set point 2-4 degrees from your normal setting to help save electricity. This will prevent the house/office from becoming too cold overnight and thus enabling the air conditioner to warm the house/office quicker when you raise the temperature set point back to your usual setting.

OR

- Start the air conditioner a couple of hours earlier than you normally would in the morning.
- If outside conditions are very cold (approx. 7°C or lower) supplementary heating may be used such as electric or gas heaters to complement & speed the heating up.
- Keep outside doors and windows closed.
- Keep doors to unconditioned areas (eg laundries, bathrooms etc.) closed. Note that any doorways on the return air path will need to be kept open, which may mean that doors to an unconditioned hallway will need to be kept open.
- Keep internal blinds or curtains closed.
- Do not use CONT FAN when selecting fan speeds.
- Only switch on the maximum zones specified in the quote. Switch other zones off. If your installer/dealer has not specified what area they have allowed for, then they have probably only allowed for the main living area. Seek advice from installer/dealer.

NOTE: Always allow the necessary amount of fresh air into rooms.

#### RESETTING THE AIRCONDITIONER

Switch the air conditioner off at the main power switch. The main power switch is occasionally located adjacent the outdoor unit. Wait about 15 seconds after the air conditioner has turned off before turning the main power switch back on. You may need to wait up to 5 minutes for the compressor to turn on. If the air conditioner still does not seem to work, it may be faulty. A frequent need for resetting should be investigated. Call the installer if the air conditioner is less than 12 months old or contact the ActronAir® Service Department.

#### CLEANING AIR CONDITIONER FILTERS

Air conditioner filters require regular cleaning or replacing (depending on the type). As filters accumulate dust they block up, reducing airflow and the cooling or heating capacity of the air conditioner. In addition some types lose filtration efficiency the dirtier they get. Some filters are located in hinged filter frames attached to the return air grille. These filters are typically residential filters. They are generally of the washable type and should be cleaned by gently washing with water. If water by itself is not cleaning the filter sufficiently, use a mild detergent. These filters usually require very frequent cleaning. It is recommended to clean the filter monthly.



## GLASS/WINDOWS

### ROUTINE CLEANING

Hand cleaning of the glass surface to visibly remove accumulated dust or fingerprints can be accomplished using a number of different glass cleaning products. Recommended cleaning products are Windex® Glass (available from supermarkets) or a mixture of one part vinegar to ten parts water. Other commercially available vinegar- based glass cleaners have generally demonstrated an ability to provide a clean, streak-free glass surface.

#### Procedure:

- Flood the glass surface with the spray-on cleaning solution or with a cloth saturated with the cleaning solution. Be generous with the amount of solution applied.
- Scrub the wet surface with a clean, lint free towel or cloth.
- Wipe dry with a dry, clean, lint free towel or cloth.
- To prevent streaking, stop wiping when the glass is almost dry and there is a uniform film left on the glass surface.

### SPECIAL PRODUCTS

Glasses with a Low E or reflective coating need to be treated with care. Please ensure special care is taken when cleaning these glass types to ensure the coating is protected and not damaged once cleaned. Do not use razor blades, steel wool or other metallic objects on the coated surface.

### WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do not clean the glass when the glass is hot or in direct sunlight.
- Do not allow cleaning solutions to contact the edges of Laminated glass, Insulating Glass Units or Mirrors.
- Do not use cleaners which contain Hydrofluoric or Phosphoric acid as they are corrosive to the glass surface.
- Abrasive cleaners, powder based cleaners, scouring pads or other harsh materials should not be used to clean windows or other glass products.
- Do not store or place other material in contact with the glass. (This can damage the glass or create a heat trap leading to thermal breakage).
- Avoid causing extreme temperature changes to the glass as this may lead to thermal fracture of the glass, i.e. do not splash hot water on cold glass or freezing water on hot glass.
- Some tapes or adhesives can stain or damage glass surfaces. Avoid using such materials unless they are known to be easily removed.

## CARPET

### REGULAR MAINTENANCE

Vacuum your nylon carpet twice a week to keep it in top condition, particularly in high traffic areas.

- Use a quality bagless or barrel vacuum.
- Steam clean every 12-18 months depending on usage.

STAIN	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Blood	1	2	9	
Chewing Gum	3	2	9	
Coffee	2	7	2	9
Faeces	2	6	9	
Nail Polish	4	9		
Paint (latex)	1	2	9	
Rust	5			
Soot	8			
Urine (fresh)	1	2	9	
Urine (old)	2	9		
Vomit	2	6	9	
Wine (white)	2	7	2	9

### CLEANSING AGENT/TREATMENT:

1. Cold water
2. 1 teaspoon mild laundry detergent approved for nylon and one teaspoon of white vinegar in 1 litre of warm water.
3. Chill with aerosol freezing agent or ice cubes in a plastic bag. Pick or scrape off gum.
4. Clear nail polish remover without lanolin
5. Rust remover (to be applied by a professional carpet cleaner)
6. Clear household disinfectant
7. Undiluted white vinegar
8. Vacuum immediately. If any residue remains call a professional carpet cleaner.
9. Rinse with warm water.

### QUICK TIPS

- Most common household food and beverage spills can be removed from nylon carpets.
- Follow the spot cleaning guide to the left.
- Act fast before the spill penetrates the carpet fibre, for easier removal.
- Blot and rub gently, being careful not to alter the surface pile of the carpet.
- You can treat the spill multiple times until the stain is gone.
- If the stain persists, contact a professional carpet steam cleaner.