

# Keeping your Cool

## *Keeping your Cool*

Warm breezes mean the return of the air conditioning season is right around the corner. Make sure your unit is ready to keep you cool with a little preventive maintenance. Here are some tips from the DIY Network on how to keep your HVAC in its best shape.

## *A Good Cleaning*

Give your outside unit a good cleaning before the full heat of summer hits. Clear away any debris, like the last of winter's dead leaves, from inside and outside the unit. Remove the fan cage and give the inside and outside of the fins on the walls of the unit a gentle spray with a hose. If they're especially dirty, hit the home improvement center for a spray cleaner just for HVAC units. While you're cleaning, look for bent fins and straighten them with a fin straightening tool or a butter knife. Be gentle, though; you don't want to damage the tubing.

## *Inside Maintenance*

For the inside unit, remove the panel to expose the condenser inside. Dust the coil with a soft brush, then use a no-rinse condenser cleaner spray from the home improvement store to clean it. Clean the drip pan with soap and hot water, then dump a 50-50 solution of water and bleach down the pan to inhibit algae growth.

## *Hiring a Pro*

If any of this sounds like hard work, or if you have a clog or discover a problem with your HVAC, turn to a pro. Some heating and air companies may even offer a maintenance contract where they drop by on a schedule. Look for a heating and air service with good recommendations. As with any contractor, also check to make sure their licenses and insurance are up to date and get any estimates and contracts in writing.

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