

HOME

Make Your “Full House” Fully Energy-Efficient This Winter



(NU) -The COVID-19 pandemic has rapidly turned the “new normal” household into hubs for all family life, moving the workplace, grade school, college, extracurricular activities, meals, gyms, and hobbies, all under one roof.

Although this new “Full House” dynamic could forge family bonds, it will also cause energy use and utility bills to skyrocket with all home technologies, appliances and systems running overtime at unprecedented levels - making optimal, energy-efficient home climate control a critical part of both keeping everyone comfortable AND minimizing utility bills due to significantly more time spent at home.

The good news is that families can successfully prevent a utility bill blitz this winter by following a few simple steps. With home heating and cooling accounting for nearly half of home energy use, small steps can go a long way.

- **Ease Into Electric:** According to Columbia University’s Earth Institute, electric systems are a solution to decarbonize home climate control. Among the most energy-efficient heating and cooling products, electricity-powered ductless mini-split systems, offered by companies including Fujitsu General America, can save as much as 25 percent on your energy bill.

Mini-splits use thin copper tubing to pump refrigerant from an outdoor compressor directly into an indoor air-handling unit, where the air is quietly distributed to the interior space.

- **Get “Smart” About Climate Control:** When it comes to smart home-temperature control, there are Smart HVAC Systems and Smart Thermostats. Smart HVAC systems have built-in Internet capability and can be controlled directly without additional equipment. Smart Home Thermostats create “smart” systems by enabling remote temperature control via a mobile or Internet-connected device or voice-operated home automation system.

- **Voice Your Preference:** Take

control of your comfort. Most HVAC manufacturers offer apps that enable systems to be controlled from anywhere using a mobile device. Voice-control capability uses digital assistants, such as Amazon Alexa or Google Home, to verbally dictate home temperatures. Easily controlling the temperature more closely allows homeowners to be more comfortable and improve energy savings.

- **Find Your Efficient Comfort Zone:** Many of us live in homes designed for bigger families, but have yet to downsize. If you find yourself using a fraction of your home on a regular basis, consider upgrading to a zoned ducted, or ductless system. That will allow you to save energy heating and cooling spaces where you and your family don’t spend a lot of time. This will multiply savings as you’re not only needing less cooling, but you also gain from a more efficient system in the spaces you do still use.

- **Try Low-tech Fixes:** Simple changes can have a big impact. Take advantage of the sun’s energy to heat your home by opening your south-facing curtains at sunrise to make best use of “passive solar gain.” Force down warm air. Denser, cooler air stays closer to the ground, and warmer air rises. So, force it downwards with a low-speed fan. Insulate and fill the gaps. Warmed air leaking out around poorly sealed window frames, power sockets, recessed light fittings, and other gaps is a big source of heat loss in homes. Thick curtains help to insulate glass at windows.

Achieving a sense of peaceful co-existence in your increasingly crowded, multi-functional home does not need to make your family members hot under the collar. If a new system is right for you, many Fujitsu systems with the Energy Star rating are more than twice as efficient as the minimum standard set by the government. To learn more or find a contractor near you, call 888-888-3424 or visit www.constantcomfort.com.