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How to Throw a Low-Energy Party

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Every summer seems to be getting hotter and hotter (in 2012, the United States experienced the third-hottest summer on record!^[i]) and that means Americans are using more and more energy to cool down. Sky rocketing energy use leads to massive problems like [blackouts and energy shortages](#) while also taking a huge chunk out of our bank accounts. Just because the dog days of summer are here does not mean you can't still enjoy the warmer months and throw fun parties – you just have to put a little extra thought into it.

Our Hearts movement wants to put the *fun* back into green living, and we're getting you there with this guide to throwing a cool party without the [giant utility bill](#).



Quick Guide: Energy Use for Summer Parties

- **10,000s of heat records broken in the US:** In 2012, the continental United States experienced its third-hottest summer on record.^[ii] The summer of 2011 smashed tens of thousands different heat records.^[iii] This means much heavier air conditioning use by Americans.
- **\$200 spent monthly for A/C in summer months:** The average electricity use more than doubles in the summer from 750 kWh per hour to 2,000 kWh per hour when your air conditioner is on.^[iv] On average, that comes out to a whopping \$200 each month just to run your air conditioner.
- **65% energy savings with air conditioners alternatives:** Fans are much more energy efficient than air conditioners. A whole-house fan can use up to 65% less energy than an air conditioning unit while window and ceiling fans use a fraction of even that energy (about 200 watts per hour) and cost only about \$10 per year to operate^[v].
- **Billions spent on summer parties, before A/C expenses:** Summer is the time to party, from barbecues to pool parties to trips to the beach or park. On July 4th weekend alone, nearly 90% of all Americans (250 million people) attend an Independence Day celebration!^[vi] Party costs top \$3 billion on July 4th for parties, food, and entertainment – excluding energy costs.
- **15 to 20 degrees F added to indoor temps with bad habits:** Obviously the summer months are hot but your house doesn't have to be scorching if you use smart habits. Having shades open can increase room temperature by 15-20 degrees; stoves and other appliances by another 10-15 degrees^[vii].

Take Action! Throw an Energy-Efficient Summer Party

1. **Throw an outdoor party:** Of course, one of the easiest ways to avoid using A/C energy is to just move the whole party outdoors if possible. It is the summer after all, what better time for an outdoor cookout? Save a ton of energy inside without skimping on any of the fun outside. Provide cool spots by renting a tent, setting up a kiddie pool in the shade, and popping up some umbrellas where people can get out of the sun.
2. **Go to the beach or the park:** Why stay home at all? Hit the beach or the park for your party! Many beaches and parks will have grills or allow you to bring your own. The wide open space gives your parties a ton of room to work with while the park trees or the beach water give you a great way to cool off.
3. **Shade windows strategically:** If you want to get into the summer party spirit at home without the waste, you need to make sure your home is ready to handle the summer. Start by drawing the shades during the day to prevent solar heat gain. If you have a house, strategically placed trees can save a ton on your energy bill by providing some much needed shade.
4. **Avoid generating heat before the party:** Try to skip things like baking, running the lights, or doing laundry before the party – all habits that will heat up your house before guests arrive.
5. **Shade your air conditioner:** Get the most out of your air conditioner. It should be installed in window that doesn't get too much sun (if possible). Save even more by setting your thermostat to 78 F or higher to maximize energy savings.
6. **Replace air conditioner with two fans:** You don't need to crank your air conditioning unit to stay cool. Consider the two-fan approach: Put a fan blowing air in on one window and a fan blowing the air out in the other. This creates a wind-tunnel effect that cools the air and keeps it moving.
7. **Add a fan to your air conditioner:** Use a fan in conjunction with your air conditioner, allowing you to set your unit to a lower setting while still keeping cool and saving energy.
8. **Cook outdoors:** If you are throwing a house party, try to avoid cooking indoors. Stoves can raise the indoor temperature immensely and you want to avoid cooking after 1 pm. Consider using a grill to make food or even the microwave.



Learn More: Summer Energy Efficiency

- Find out more about saving money on your air conditioning bill and making your unit more energy efficient at [Idaho Power](#).
- Discover how to make your house more energy efficient and save you a ton on your utility bills at the [US Department of Energy](#).
- Check out this [infographic on power consumption facts for the US](#) to see how we stack up to other countries.

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