

The Great Indoors: How To Increase Your Comfort At Home

(NAPSA)—During the cooler months of the year, many of us retreat to the great indoors to find comfort and warmth. Yet, many of us may not find the comfy, cozy environment we're looking for, due to inefficient heating systems or stale, re-circulated air that's filled with all sorts of pollutants.

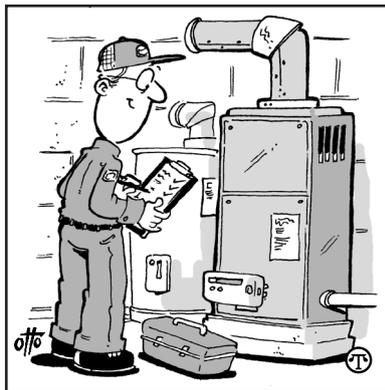
To help make home, sweet home truly a relaxing retreat, Lennox Industries, a leading provider of customized home comfort systems, provides answers to some common questions about how to increase home comfort this season, based on the pioneering and knowledge of company founder Dave Lennox.

Q: I'm concerned about the age of my heating system. How do I know it will keep my family warm and make it through the season?

A: Start by scheduling an appointment with a home-heating professional to have your furnace, boiler or heat pump inspected and serviced to ensure it's running as efficiently as possible.

If your heating system is more than 12 years old, you may want to consider replacing it with an Energy Star-labeled system, which will be more energy efficient and can help lower utility bills. Some of the newest systems are 95 percent efficient, which means only 5 percent of the energy it uses isn't being used to heat the home. That can save you hundreds of dollars each year compared to older furnaces. Some of the newer systems also feature variable-speed motors to minimize up-and-down temperature fluctuations and ensure improved comfort and quiet operation.

In addition, you may want to ask your local technician about a dual fuel heating system, which switches between an electric-powered heat pump and a gas furnace



to heat your home. These systems can be more cost effective, depending on the outdoor temperature and the area of the country you live in.

Q: The air in my house feels stale and stuffy. What can I do about it?

A: There are three primary issues that can cause stale, stuffy air—high humidity, lack of ventilation and poor air distribution. When air doesn't circulate properly, it can become stale and retain humidity from common household activities, such as cooking or showering. While it might be easiest to just open a window, that's not always practical during the colder months of the year.

Instead, ask your local heating and cooling professional about a whole-home dehumidification system that can help control moisture levels in the home to maximize your comfort. A heat- or energy-recovery ventilator also can exchange stale, re-circulated air with fresh, filtered outside air, so that you can enjoy the fresh-air feel of an open window with virtually little or no heat or energy loss.

Finally, be sure to have a heating and cooling professional check your duct system for any potential leaks, which can contribute to poor air distribution and cause stale or stuffy air.

Q: I suffer from seasonal allergies and am thinking about purchasing a room air cleaner. Any advice?

A: Millions of portable room air cleaners—often touted in TV infomercials—are sold each year, but most consumers purchase them without realizing that many of these products may actually add to the pollution in a home. In fact, a study funded by the National Science Foundation found that several ionic air purifiers, which are often sold as portable room air cleaners, can produce unacceptable levels of ozone, which is a known lung irritant and may lead to shortness of breath, chest pain, wheezing or coughing.

Instead of buying a stand-alone air cleaner, consider a whole-home system that will improve the air you breathe in all rooms of the house. For example, the Lennox Healthy Climate 16 Media Air Cleaner removes at least 95 percent of circulated particles and biological pollutants, such as dust, pet dander and mold spores, and it doesn't produce ozone.

In addition, purchasing a single, whole-home system instead of multiple room units is usually more effective and cost-efficient for homeowners.

To learn more about maximizing your comfort, improving the air you breathe and lowering utility bills this season, visit www.ItPaysToLiveSmart.com.

Dave Lennox single-handedly elevated the standard of American living in 1895, when he pioneered the riveted-steel furnace. His vision has shaped modern home comfort through innovation in heating, cooling and indoor air-quality products.

