

A/C 101: Making Sure Your Air Conditioning Works its Best

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There's no messing around when it comes to the Arizona heat, and on average, July is the Valley's hottest month, with an average high temperature of 105 degrees. That being said, no one wants to end up with a broken air conditioner. To make sure you aren't stuck without A/C during the upcoming summer months that are just going to get hotter, look out for these signs and follow these tips to make sure your A/C is working as efficiently as possible.

Find a good contractor

Erik Bryan, CEO and owner of [Precision Air & Heating](#) in Chandler, recommends this tip first and foremost as well as getting on a maintenance contract with your contractor to have annual service.

"A lot of times, people don't think about their air conditioner so it's really good to be on with a good reputable company that will call you once a year and remind you, 'Hey, Mrs. Johnson, it's time for your annual service,'" he says.

And there are several tools and tips to finding a hardworking, reputable contractor. First, check the [Better Business Bureau](#) for contractors that have at least an "A" rating and the [Arizona Registrar of Contractors](#) to be sure the company is licensed.

Another easy way to find a contractor is getting a referral from a friend or neighbor: "We live in Arizona, so you're not going to find many people that haven't had an air conditioning contractor to their house at some point in time," Bryan says.

Finally, get on [Google](#) and [Yelp](#) to find out what previous customers have to say. If customers had excellent or horrible service, they will make their experiences known; however, Bryan recommends reading these reviews with a grain of salt.

Change your air filter

Bryan advises changing your air conditioner's filter once a month. And aside from just changing it, choose one of better quality besides the generic disposable one at your local hardware store.

"If you're replacing your air filter on a monthly basis, you're going to be OK."

Keep the air conditioner's exterior as clean as possible

Remove any debris that is around the machine or on it that may be blocking airflow, and get rid of any dust. Bryan recommends hosing it down every once in awhile to remove any dust. This method won't hurt the air conditioner either.

"Short of that, there's not a whole lot a homeowner can do other than having a good contractor," Bryan says.

As for being proactive and recognizing potential breakdowns, there are a few signs to look for.

The first is if your the conditioner is running, but your home is still hot. This is the most obvious, but also means that a breakdown is already in the works.

Another sign is if you hear any abnormal or loud noises coming from the unit. "It's a really good sign that it's under some stress and there could be some potential problems," Bryan says.

Finally, if your unit is running constantly and never shutting off, there might be a problem. You probably notice every once in awhile when the air kicks back on, not even realizing it's been off, but if this isn't happening, get it checked out.

Remember that when your air conditioner breaks down, there are bound to be 100's of other people experiencing the same thing. Bryan said just the other week that Precision Air & Heating received 268 calls from people without air in just one day. So be proactive about keeping your home cool, and take preventative measures to avoid breakdowns.