



## How to choose an air conditioner

Most important variable is to buy the air conditioning unit with a capacity that matches the room size. Measure the square footage of the space, the height of the ceiling and consider other factors that will affect the temperature of the room: the quality of the insulation, the size and number of windows, the exposure to sun and whether there are internal heat sources, such as a stove, refrigerator and dishwasher.

The capacity of most air conditioners is rated in BTU's per hour. A 250 square-foot room requires a 7,000 BTU unit. Add 4,000 BTU if the room is a kitchen. Brick houses and room with high ceilings require larger capacity units.

Avoid an oversized unit. It will cost more to operate. On hot, humid days, it will be less effective because the large capacity allows cooling faster than drying the air. The room will feel cool, but clammy. For more information, visit [www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?croomac.pr-room-ac](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?croomac.pr-room-ac).

Other considerations:

- Best to have a switch that allows recirculation of the room's air (best setting on the hottest days) or opening to outside air (to refresh the air).
- Motorized louvers distribute the air more evenly than manually operated ones.
- Have a wall outlet near the site of the air conditioner. Extension cords are less safe. Larger units may require a dedicated 230-volt circuit.
- Make sure that a window unit will fit tightly into the window frame to allow it to work efficiently.
- Energy Efficiency Ratings range from 8-13. The higher the EER, the more efficient the model and lower your electrical bill.

### Air Cleaners

**What can they do?** Air cleaners help reduce exposure to pet dander, dust, mold, pollen and smoke particles. They do not eliminate viruses, odors, dust mites or harmful gases, such as carbon monoxide. Even with an air cleaner, windows needed to closed and pets needed to be kept from a bedroom for allergy sufferers.

**How do they work?** There are two systems for removing air particles.

- HEPA filter
- Electrostatic precipitators (Honeywell, Hoover and Sharper Image)
- Hybrid devices use both technologies

**Price.** \$100-600

**Noise.** Some units have a low-level motor sound, while others produce only the sound of the circulating air. It is usually easy to adjust to the sound.

**Recommendation.** Air cleaners do have variable speed motors. Run at full capacity at all times for peak efficiency.