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## Fresh Air in the Mechanical Age

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# Fresh Air in the *Mechanical Age*

*Shirley Ambrose finds air conditioning  
as modern as frozen strawberries*

"**L**AND sakes," exclaim Grandma and Grandpa, "what's all this new-fangled talk about air conditioning in the home? Is it a fad, like college women's knee-length hose and men's high-water trousers, or will it turn out the way horseless carriages did?"

There no longer is anything "new-fangled" about home air conditioning. Already millions of dollars annually are spent for it by Americans. Each year equipment becomes higher in quality and lower in price. Home air conditioning is a present possibility that homemakers should consider.

Benefits of air conditioning are well known: Cool rooms in the summer, warm ones in the winter, no drafts, correct humidities at all times—it is agreed that all these and more of air conditioning pleasures would be fine to have. "Yes," one might say, "and so would a winter place on the Riviera, if we were millionaires."

But the fact is that air conditioning your home is no terrifying investment in comparison with other expenses which are probably accepted as matters of

course. Let's assume that you're building a six or eight room house—and that you're going to install, as an absolute necessity, a good heating system. That will cost you several hundred dollars. All right! Already you have a part of complete air conditioning—the heating part. All that must be added to get it "complete" is equipment for cooling, regulating the humidity, cleaning and distributing the conditioned air throughout your home.

Top-grade equipment for this, installed and ready to go to work, will cost from \$400 to \$700 in addition to the furnace. The lower-priced unit heats, cools and regulates humidity by circulated air alone, while the higher figure refers to the "split" type of system, in which circulated air does part of the work and radiator heat is used for the rest.

It is surprising to many individuals to learn that in modern air conditioning for the home there are no combinations to remember, no mazes of pipes and tricky gadgets. With the help of experts, the equipment is selected and then installed. It works automatically the year around and takes little more space than a furnace.

But why is air conditioning important in the home, a small scale institution? The answer is simple: Where are health and comfort more important than in the home? On those muggy summer nights the air conditioned home is a pleasant sleeping place, for the circulation of air is complete and gentle, reducing humidity that causes sticky heat.

Eliminating extremes in humidity means, too, that doors do not stick, furniture retains its finish and does not bulge at the joints, pianos need to be tuned less often. Cleanliness is another important factor: house-cleaning is done once a year instead of several times; light woodwork and wall paper stay fresh much longer; curtains and draperies are cleaned less often. Dust and dirt must find hideouts if dust and dirt exist—with air conditioning, the "hideout" is a filter. Children can play in spacious basements that contain no out-dated coal rooms or furnace smudges.

For the kitchen, radiator heat is used in winter, and in summer small separate exhaust fans maintain fresh cleanliness. Steam heat is better in the bathroom, too, where a waft of air—gentle though it would be—from the circulated air grilles would not be so welcome after a warm dip in the tub. A similar radiation system is used in the built-in garage, where there is no need for cooling.

With the cost of purchasing and installing home air conditioning comes the cost of using. First there's the furnace alone. In a well-insulated house of moderate size and type, the bill for fuel oil for a furnace should be well under \$100 a year. The total air conditioning operating cost, including the above \$100, averages about \$190 yearly. This is for everything—heating, cooling, humidity control, air filtering and circulation. In short, it costs approximately an extra \$90 a year for the added comfort and health advantages offered by a complete job of air conditioning.



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