

Del's

Summer 2019

HOME COMFORT REPORT

Reasons to Consider Replacing Your A/C System

Quite often, homeowners struggle to determine whether they should continue to deal with repairing their older system or if they should simply replace it. This dilemma is understandable, considering the significant investment required to get a new air conditioner. It only makes sense to try to get the most out of the unit you have and delay the cost of a new installation.

However, there may come a point in time when trying to keep that old air conditioner going becomes more expensive than replacing it. As with any machine, when A/C units get older, they tend to become less efficient. The rising cost of your utilities, combined with the cost of frequent repairs, can add up extremely quickly.

Those who own air conditioners that use the refrigerant known as R-22 have even more reason to start looking for a new system. This substance is in the process of being phased out by the Environmental Protection Agency, which means increased repair and maintenance costs. Since these systems were built before 2010, many of them are nearing the end of their lifespan, anyway.

If you're unsure about whether or not you need a new system, call us today! We can provide you with plenty of valuable information and explain your options if you decide it is time for a brand new system.

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AIR CONDITIONING TUNE-UPS CAN SAVE YOU MONEY.

Any mechanical system requires maintenance to continue to operate efficiently. Tune-up your car and it will get slightly better gas mileage. Tune-up your air conditioner and you will save on utilities. How much money? In a university study, a comprehensive air conditioning tune-up **saved the average home \$32.76 per month** during cooling season. Do you need a tune up every year? Using the same homes, researchers discovered that **follow up tune-ups saved \$25.60 per month**, despite the fact the systems were tuned up the previous year.

Knowing When You Need AC Repair... and When You Don't.

Is it time to have your air conditioner repaired, or are the problems you're experiencing totally normal? It's a question many homeowners have asked themselves. Knowing when it's time to pursue repairs and when it's time to relax can be difficult, especially when you're dealing with something as valuable as your home's cooling system. While there's no fool-proof way to determine whether or not it's time for repairs 100% of the time, a little knowledge can go a long way when it comes to scheduling repairs. To save yourself money and worry, spend a bit of time evaluating your problem before you call in a repair specialist.

EVALUATING THE SYMPTOMS

Your A/C unit has been acting up or isn't kicking out as much cool air as you think it should. Your first step should be evaluating the symptoms of your problem. Why are you worried that the A/C unit may need to be repaired? Think through any signs of wear and tear that the unit has begun to show. Ask yourself the following questions.

- *Do you hear knocking or grinding noises when the unit powers on or turns off?*
- *Does the unit cycle on and off continuously?*
- *Is your unit kicking out as much cold air as it should?*
- *Has your unit frozen or shut down unexpectedly more than once?*

EVALUATING SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

Taking a look at the symptoms of your cooling problem is just the first step in deciding whether or not you should call in a repair professional. You'll also need to think about the overall performance of your A/C unit. Think about how completely and efficiently the unit can meet your cooling demands. As you do so, take any special circumstances into account. Has it been hotter outside than usual? Have you had modifications made to your home's electrical system? Have your energy bills been spiking? It's important to keep these types of changes in mind as you evaluate your options.

REACHING A DECISION

Once you've thought through the symptoms of your cooling problems and have evaluated the performance of your cooling system, you'll be able to decide if it's time to call for repairs or not. If you answered yes to any of the questions in the symptoms section, it's a good idea to talk to a repair professional. While some noises and cycling are normal, only a pro will be able to tell.

It's also a good idea to call in a specialist if you've noticed significant changes in how your cooling system operates. Take a look at overall electricity usage. If your bills have gone up but your home hasn't gotten any cooler, it's time to have a professional evaluate your A/C unit.



When to Replace Your Air Conditioning System

New air conditioners can easily cost thousands of dollars, so many homeowners want to delay replacing their air conditioners as long as possible. Expanding an air conditioner's lifespan with regular maintenance is definitely a wise investment, but there are circumstances when replacing one of your most-used appliances is the best choice. Here are common signs it's time to replace your air conditioner.

1. Older Than 10 Years

Over the last decade, huge advances have been made in air conditioner technology due to new regulations requiring increased levels of energy efficiency. Depending on the age of the air conditioner, replacing an older model could result in lowering the energy used to cool your home by up to 50%. Ask your HVAC contractor to calculate your potential savings based on your home size and existing system.

2. Constantly Needs Repairs

A repair bill of a few hundred dollars may feel less painful than the cost of installing a new air conditioner. Especially when times are tough, even a few repairs may seem easier to swallow. However, by the time an air conditioner begins needing frequent repairs, it's probably close to the end of its useful lifespan anyway. There are more ways to make purchasing a new unit easier than you may think. You can get rebates from local utility companies, federal tax rebates, manufacturer rebates, special financing, and payment plans, or discounts through your HVAC contractor.

3. Home Renovations

Many homeowners add a room to their home or convert spaces such as garages or patios into living spaces. Often, they use their existing air conditioner to cool these spaces. However, that air conditioner was probably designed to work only with the home's existing square footage and is likely to be overtaxed. If these kinds of improvements have been made to your home, consider upgrading to a unit with a higher cooling capacity.

If you're still not sure if it's time to replace your air conditioner, talk to a full-service HVAC contractor. Our service technicians can provide the professional attention your HVAC system needs to keep it running smoothly. Call us today to schedule your next visit.

Regular Maintenance Extends the Lifespan of Your HVAC System

Your HVAC equipment is expensive, and you want it to last as long as possible. Even though furnaces, heat pumps, and A/C units aren't thought of as "high maintenance" equipment, they do require regular attention. Giving your equipment the occasional maintenance it needs can mean the difference between a short-lived appliance and a long-lasting one.

FILTER CHANGES

One of the most important things you can do for your HVAC equipment is to change the filters regularly. If you don't know how to do this, check your user's manual or ask our HVAC technician to show you how. Most filters need to be changed monthly or every two to three months. Cleaning or replacing a dirty filter can ease your system's workload and reduce wear and tear.

MAINTENANCE CALLS

Most homes should be visited twice per year for an HVAC tune-up. Scheduling regular maintenance visits is easy to put off for another day, but considering how expensive it is to buy a new furnace, heat pump, or A/C system, it makes financial sense to take care of your existing equipment.

VISUAL INSPECTIONS

In between maintenance calls, it pays to visually inspect your HVAC equipment in order to spot potential problems. Take an occasional stroll around your A/C condenser to make sure it hasn't sustained storm damage or become blocked by foliage. Look over your furnace with a flashlight for cracks and leaks, and observe your furnace flame for color changes, which could indicate a gas leak.



Walnut Dark Chocolate Truffles

INGREDIENTS

200g (7oz) Walnuts	55g (2oz) Unsalted Butter
150g (5.3oz) Dark Chocolate (70% cocoa content)	300g (10.6oz) Dulce De Leche (or Caramel)
	55g (2oz) Dried Fruit (raisins, cranberries), finely chopped

PREPARATION

- 1 Coarsely chop walnuts (use a food processor, if you have one – but be careful – it will take only a few seconds – you don't want them finely ground)
- 2 Melt chocolate & butter over double boiler. Let it cool down a bit before adding Dulce de Leche (or caramel) in it. Mix well.
- 3 Throw in dried fruit $\frac{2}{3}$ of coarsely chopped walnuts & combine well.
- 4 Place the mix in the fridge for 15 minutes or until it has hardened a bit.
- 5 Using your hands form a bite-size ball. Coat it with coarsely chopped walnuts and place onto a tray lined with baking paper. Repeat until you have used all the truffle mix.
- 6 Chill in the fridge for 1 hour.
- 7 Transfer the truffles in an airtight container and keep them in the fridge before serving.



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