



Things to Think About When You're Adding Air Conditioning to Your Home

Summer is here which means it's time for air conditioning. Having central air conditioning is life changing. No more sweaty nights tossing and turning because it's so humid in your home it could pass for a rain forest. No more carrying window units up and down the basement stairs. The cost of the installation is only part of what to considered when choosing to have central air conditioning installed.

Correct sizing is the most important thing.

Getting the size right is essential. An oversized system will cool the house so quickly it doesn't dehumidify the air well (an important role in comfort), and if it's too small it may dehumidify well but not cool the home.

Should you go with a more efficient system?

In our area, the minimum SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio) is 13 for air conditioning and 14 SEER for heat pumps. Given that your old system probably isn't running at peak efficiency anymore, your cooling bills should drop. Or you can opt for even higher SEER unit. A 16 SEER system, for example, might add about \$2,000 in upfront cost however many unities in our area offer rebates when installing a 16 or higher SEER unit and could reduce your cooling costs by another 14% a year.

Do you need new ducts?

If you had an old central air system or forced air heat, your contractor can sometimes connect new the AC equipment to the ducts that you already have. However, the old duct system may not be correct for your new system. If they are leaky, you could lose up to 20% of your cooled air into your attic and basement, says physicist Max Sherman, of the Lawrence Berkley National Laboratory. Make sure to have the ducts checked, and if necessary sealed.

If you don't have ducts, or the old ones are super inefficient, what can you do? A contractor can install new ducts in the attic and or basement. Or you can have ductless mini split air conditioning installed. Not everyone likes the look of the indoor unit hanging on the walls.

Timing your purchase can save you money.

Timing your air conditioning purchase right can save you big. In the spring and summer phones can be ringing off the hook. In the winter, contractors are trying to find enough work to keep their crews busy so typically the quotes are 10% to 20% lower in the off seasons.¹

¹ Josh Garskof, *5 Things to Know Before You Add Central Air Conditioning*, <http://time.com/money/4282312/central-air-conditioning-need-to-know/> (accessed 6/27/17)