

Ceiling Fan Guide

Ceiling fans help keep down heating and cooling home energy costs by circulating air in the room. When buying a ceiling fan there are a number of things to consider. This guide provides information to help you with your decision about what to buy, and how to best use a ceiling fan.

What size fan?

For a large room a fan of 132 cm is needed to be effective.

For a medium to small room a fan of 122 cm is best.

There is no star rating for ceiling fans.

What settings to choose?

Most fans will come with three speeds. Choose a fan with a fairly slow low speed as this will be the speed to use in the winter, when creating a draught from a fast fan is not needed.

Fans will also have a winter or summer setting. This reverses the direction of the blades. Use accordingly. If it is not possible to change (the switches are usually on the fan base) then leave set on winter.

How do I run the fan?

In winter have the setting on winter and when using heating, run the fan on slow. This draws up the warm air and pushes it across the ceiling and down the walls to the lower parts of the room, without creating a noticeable draught. Use a thermometer at sitting height to gauge the rise in temperature.

In summer, switch to summer and run speed according to how much air you want moving across your skin, as this is how you feel cooler. The room itself is not cooled by the fan.

Do I need a light in the fan?

Most people would consider a fan with a light because there are often lights already where a fan would be best situated. It may be that the fan can be wired into the existing light socket, if the electrician thinks this is appropriate.

Installation

You will need an electrician to install your fan. If it is difficult to wire a switch then remote speed adjusters are available. These can sometimes be a cheaper option than wiring a switch. Fans should be a minimum 2.1 metres from the floor and 300mm from the ceiling. The highest part of the ceiling in the heated area is recommended.

Cost

Ceiling fans cost between \$100 and many hundreds of dollars. Retailers suggest the mid price range is usually a good quality appliance for reasonable price.

Installation can cost \$150 upwards. This amount depends on access and switches.

Remote switches are approximately \$100. Fans seem to be cheaper on line.

The retailer may be able to suggest a reliable tradesman, otherwise obtain at least two quotes.

Power use

Most fans run on low use about the same amount of energy as a medium light bulb.

Fans use more power when run on fast. Compare the wattage on the fans in store. If the fan is 50 watts then it will cost about 1.5 cents per hour on fast. If the use of a fan enables a heater to be turned down by two degrees this could save 20% on heating costs.

Landlord

If you are renting the landlord must agree to having the fan installed. They might even like to make a contribution to helping make the home more energy efficient!

Brands and retailers

Some common brand names are: Futura, Optima, Quest , Capri

Retailers include: Beacon Lighting, Retravision