

Cooling down in Auckland: Jeremy's story

Our renovation got a lot of things wrong, but the one thing we got right was summer cooling.

When we moved to Auckland, we looked for a house which was facing north and sheltered from the southerly winds - based on our experience of living in Wellington. Little did we realise that one of our biggest problems was going to be in summer.

Summer came and so did the damp sticky heat. Our 1950s brick and tile house retained the heat really well, but its design meant there was no airflow. The house heated up and was still hot and airless at midnight – long sleepless nights followed!

When we renovated, we got lots of things wrong – but one thing we did get right was addressing summer heat.

Creating air flow

We opened up the separate living room, dining room and kitchen, and instead of walls and windows, we put large opening doors at each end. In summer we have wide open doors opposite each other to capture the maximum breeze.

We were also concerned that about airflow while we were not in the house. All our windows have strong security stays which allow them to stay open all the time in summer. We also included shugs in the opening doors onto our deck – these are sliding windows included in the door frame. They can be left open with a gap at top and bottom when the doors are shut.

Shading

Probably the best thing we've ever done to cool our living area down is to increase the shading. We already had good eaves, but once the sun hit the windows, the temperatures soared. Over half our deck we had a large shade installed. It has the same material used in large marquees so does not reduce the light but is water-proof. It has a solid structure and does not flap like sails do. In effect it stops all but the latest afternoon sun entering the living area, and, as a bonus, provides an extension of our living space, even on wet days. We love it!



Fans

In each bedroom we have installed ceiling fans – for very little energy use, these make bedtimes bearable on muggy nights. We have also put in thermal curtains – as soon as the sun starts hitting the windows, we close these to keep it out. If we are going to be away all day over summer, we keep curtains on west-facing windows closed.



Overall we're very happy with our changes and a lot more comfortable in summer.

For more information:

- See Fact sheet on Summer Cooling