



HEALTHY LIFESTYLE HOME NEWS

How to Prevent a Multigenerational Home Thermostat War This Winter



Photo: Deposit Photos

By Andrew Armstrong

Multigenerational households are on the rise with a record one-in-five Americans living in homes shared by multiple adult generations, inevitably leading to various domestic conflicts – including home temperature.

Increasing home prices, staggering child care expenses, exorbitant assisted living and nursing home costs, college debt, longer life expectancies, and the growth of

ethnic communities are all fueling this shift. The “boomerang” and “reverse boomerang” effect are the most common causes of this shared living trend.

While adult children continue to return home, aging “Silent Generation” parents are increasingly moving in with their “Boomer” children with nearly 44 percent (28.4 million) of these households consisting of three or more generations. It’s a widespread change making its impact felt throughout America.

Bridging the Thermostat Gap

Mom versus dad, grandmother versus grand-daughter. When it comes to home climate control, the generation and gender gap is real.

These are facts to support this domestic dilemma:

- Everyone has a different “thermal comfort level” or preferred room temperature based on physical, psychological and other factors including clothing and activity level.
- Women’s bodies produce less heat than men’s with women preferring a far warmer environment (77 degrees) than men (72 degrees).
- As we age, our bodies become sensitive to cold temperatures because of a decrease in the metabolic rate.

Here are some practical tips that can help prevent the dreaded Thermostat War this winter:

Get “Smart” About Home Temperature

When it comes to smart home temperature control, there are Smart HVAC Systems and Smart Thermostats. Smart HVAC systems have built-in Internet capability and can be controlled directly without additional equipment.

Smart Home Thermostats create “smart” systems by enabling remote temperature control via a mobile or Internet-connected device or voice-operated home automation system. Several leading manufacturers, including Fujitsu

General America, offer Smart Systems as well as options to control their single and multi-zone Halcyon and Airstage heating and cooling systems using a third-party smart thermostat.

Increase Family Peace AND Energy Efficiency

Upgrading your system and installing a smart thermostat can significantly reduce your utility expense. The most energy-efficient heating and cooling products on the market, ductless mini-split systems, can save as much as 25 percent on your energy bill.

Further, an efficiently controlled thermostat could save an additional 10 percent a year. Here's how ductless mini-split systems work. Thin copper tubing is used to pump refrigerant from an outdoor compressor directly into an indoor air-handling unit, where the air is quietly distributed to the interior space.

This eliminates the need for basement or attic evaporators and bulky, expensive ductwork. Mini-splits are easy to install and usually require only a 3- to 4-inch hole through a wall or ceiling to connect the indoor and outdoor units.

Give Everyone Their Own Voice

Everyone gets to “voice” their own temperature preferences. Most HVAC manufacturers offer apps that enable systems to be controlled from anywhere using a mobile device. Now, voice-control capability uses digital assistants, like Amazon Alexa, to verbally dictate home temperatures – “Alexa, set the living room temperature to 70 degrees.” For instance, Fujitsu offers a free FGLair app that enables Web-activated control via mobile devices and now voice-activated control via Amazon Alexa.

Enjoy Customized Room-by-Room Comfort

Ending home climate conflicts, mini-splits feature custom zone control, letting homeowners connect two to eight indoor units to a single outdoor unit. Each

zone has its own thermostat so occupants can adjust each room to the temperature they want. Further, only occupied areas are heated which can represent a significant savings considering the kitchen, dining room, living room, and bedrooms are left unoccupied for at least 40 percent of the time in most households.

Come Together for Family Time

Don't let conflicting temperature preferences overshadow the blessing of multigenerational family bonding. Nothing can replace the value of convening in one room to eat a meal, watch a movie or play a board game. Simple adjustments and compromises can go a long way. For example, those who are cold can wear a sweater, throw on a blanket, drink a cup of tea, or even place a space heater next to them. And, there's nothing like gathering around the fireplace to foster family time.

Promote multigenerational home harmony this winter with a combination of the latest systems, smart technologies, and good old fashioned togetherness that will keep your family warm without tempers heating up.

Andrew Armstrong is the vice president of sales and marketing for **Fujitsu General America**, a national manufacturer with distributors in local communities across the country, and a 30-year industry veteran.

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