



How to Create a Cleaner Air Room at Home

When wildfire smoke gets inside your home it can make your indoor air unhealthy, but you can create a cleaner air room to help protect your health and improve your indoor air quality. A cleaner air room is set up to keep levels of smoke and other air pollutants as low as possible during wildfire smoke events.

As long as it is safe to stay indoors at home, anyone can benefit from spending time in a cleaner air room during a wildfire smoke event. A cleaner air room may be most helpful for people who are at greater risk from the effects of smoke, such as people with heart disease or lung disease, older adults, children, and pregnant women. It is also a good strategy if you cannot maintain cleaner air throughout your entire home.

Steps to Create a Cleaner Air Room at Home

1. **Choose a room.** Pick a room big enough for everyone in your household to be comfortable. A bedroom with an attached bathroom is a good choice.
2. **Prevent smoke from entering the room.** Close windows and doors, but do not do anything that makes it hard to leave the room in an emergency.
3. **Stay cool.** Run fans, window air conditioners, or central air conditioning. If your air conditioner has a fresh air option, turn it off or close the intake and run it in recirculation mode. See the Wildfire Guide fact sheet [Protect Yourself From Smoke and Heat](#) for more information.
4. **Filter the air in the room** when there is a smoke event. You will need to **buy or make an air cleaner before a smoke event using one or more of the three ways on the next page.**
5. **Avoid activities that create smoke or other air pollutants indoors,** such as smoking or vaping, burning candles, using aerosols, and vacuuming, unless you use a vacuum with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter. Avoid cooking with a stove or oven, especially with high heat or long cooking time. Use a damp cloth or mop to trap settled dust particles.
6. **Spend as much time as you can in the cleaner air room** to get the most benefit from it. When the air quality improves, even temporarily, air out the cleaner air room to freshen the air.

In Some Cases, It May Be Best to Seek Shelter Elsewhere

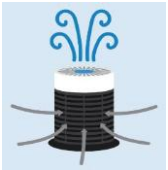
If you can't stay cool at home, the power goes out, or too much smoke is still getting in your home after you have followed the steps above, staying in a cleaner air room may not be the best option for you. Consider staying with friends or family, going to a public cleaner air shelter, or seeking relief from the smoke in another location with air conditioning and good air filtration.

Ways to Filter Air for Your Cleaner Air Room



Use a high-efficiency filter compatible with your central heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system.

You may need to consult with an HVAC technician or the manufacturer of your system to find out whether a high-efficiency filter, marked with a minimum efficiency reporting value (MERV) of 13 or higher, will work with your system. Run the system's fan as often as you can.



Use a portable air cleaner in your cleaner air room.

Choose a device with a clean air delivery rate (CADR) for tobacco smoke that is at least two-thirds of the room area in square feet. Use only [CARB-certified air cleaners](#), because they produce little or no ozone. Run the air cleaner continuously on the highest fan setting.



Use a do-it-yourself (DIY) air cleaner in your cleaner air room.

A DIY air cleaner can be an effective, less expensive option to clean the air when portable air cleaners are not available or affordable. See below for instructions on how to make one.

*Graphics from
Santa Barbara
County Air
Pollution Control
District*

If You Choose to Use a DIY Air Cleaner

- **Get a portable air cleaner if you can.** DIY air cleaner performance can be more variable depending on how they are built and maintained, and they are often louder than commercial air cleaners.
- **DIY air cleaner designs that use more filters, thicker filters, and a cardboard shroud are usually more cost effective.** Different designs may have different advantages in terms of initial cost, size, or ease-of-assembly. For instructions about how to build a DIY air cleaner, see:
 - [EPA DIY Air Cleaners](#)
 - [EPA Research and Infographics](#)
- **When assembling a DIY air cleaner, use a high-efficiency filter(s)—preferably rated MERV 13 or higher—for better filtration.** Align the arrows on the filter(s) with the direction of the air flow through the fan. Try to get a good seal between the fan and the filter. Change the filter when it appears dirty or starts to smell.

- **Use a newer box fan (made since 2012) with a UL or ETL logo. These fans have thermal safety fuses** that reduce the risk of fires or burns from overheating the fan's motor and outer surfaces. Look for fans that have a listing for electrical safety and have a mark from a certifying organization, such as UL or Intertek (the label will show the UL logo or Intertek's ETL logo, for example). If you must use an older fan, never leave the fan running unattended while you are away or sleeping.

Resources

Scan the QR code to the right to access an online version of this fact sheet and the additional resources below.



Information on Air Quality

Check out the AirNow Fire and Smoke Map, your state air quality website, or your local news for air quality information. Access these resources using the links below!

- [**AirNow Fire and Smoke Map**](#)
 - [**IOS App**](#)
 - [**Android App**](#)
- [**Wildfire Guide Fact Sheets**](#)
- [**Resources and Information on Wildland Fires and Smoke**](#)
- [**Infographics on Staying Safe Before, During and After Fires**](#)

Additional Resources

- [**EPA's Create a Clean Room Webpage**](#)
- [**EPA's Create a Clean Room Video**](#)
- [**EPA's Guide to Air Cleaners in the Home**](#)
- [**California Air Resources Board's \(CARB\) Certified Air Cleaning Devices**](#)
- [**EPA's DIY Air Cleaners Webpage**](#)
- [**EPA's DIY Air Cleaner Research**](#)

