

10 Ways To Make Your Home, Office, or Warehouse Feel More Comfortable to You

How would you like it if I told that I could make your home more comfortable?

Engineers have a secret society (ASHRAE) in which they create standards for the rest of us. They've got standards on everything you could imagine. Each standard tries its best to define goals using measurable quantities. I'm not an engineer, I'm a chemist and general contractor, but I like how they think. If you can measure it, you should be able to adjust it, and if you can adjust, you can control the results.

Last year I came across an ASHRAE Standard for Thermal Comfort (55-2004). The very thought that someone could define a standard for Thermal Comfort fascinated me. It meant that underlying our general comfort within a fixed space lay measurable variables. So, if I want to get more comfortable, I just have to adjust each of these variables, individually, until I feel great. Unfortunately for you, if you're sitting next to me, what makes me feel great may feel horrible to you. So, I'll first state each variable, and then the Ways To Make Your Home, Office, or Warehouse Feel More Comfortable to You as subsets of each variable.

Variable #1: Air Temperature

1. Adjust the temperature of your place up or down, until it feels just right. If you share a space, your fellows may not want the temperature the same as you do, so read along.

Variable #2: Mean Radiant Temperature

2. Have you ever noticed that your thermostat tells you that the temperature in the house is different than how you feel? That's because physical objects within your space have their own temperature, which affects you in a radiative manner. How do you fix cold exterior walls? Insulation. You can have foam or cellulose injected into the wall cavities of your home with minimal damage to the house. You can even do it between floors or rooms. Note that foam will benefit Variable #3 as well.
3. Or, if you rent (or are broke), try hanging blankets on your walls and drapes over your windows, it's cheap and effective.

Variable #3: Air Movement

4. You may have too much air movement, or too little. So, you can turn off that ceiling fan or redirect the heat register.

5. Or, a bigger project, hire some air sealing specialists to seal up your home. This can often be done using available rebates from your utility company. The goal is to make the air move on your terms, not Mother Nature's.

Variable #4: Relative Humidity

6. Some people like it humid, others like it dry. This one is hard to compromise on with roommates. Good luck.

Variable #5: Insulative Clothing

7. You're cold? Put on a sweater, wear better socks! Don't just turn up the heat.
8. Are you hot? Well, I'm cold and I'm sitting right next to you. Take off your sweater and lend it to me. I don't care if it's pink, it's only the two of us here.

Variable #6: Activity Levels

9. Of course you're cold you dope, you've been sitting in that chair working on your computer all day. So, either get yourself better clothing, or take a break every so often and walk around. Get some exercise, it's good for you and it will make you much more comfortable.
10. Oh, and stop playing basketball with that sweater on, of course you're going to be uncomfortable.

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