

Staying Cool in the Summer

By Lizzie Mitchell

Getting hot in the summer sun? There are loads of ways to keep yourself cool as a cucumber and forget the heat outside. Staying cool is really important to help manage your symptoms!

Inside:

1. Buy a fan – buying a cool, electric fan will help to keep your room cool by circulating cool air around it. They are relatively cheap, such as [this one](#) from Argos. If the noise bothers you, buying some cheap earplugs or noise reduction headphones can help reduce the noise sensitivity while staying cool!
2. Use a sheet instead of a duvet while you sleep. If, like me, you like sleeping with the comfort of something covering you, then a sheet will provide a lighter alternative to a heavy winter duvet.
3. Put a cold flannel on the back of your neck – when you're really hot and sweaty, this is the quickest way to cool down as the neck is where you find the jugular vein. Cooling this vein will create the same effect as sweating - providing an area of cooling that is near blood vessels going to and from the core of your body.
4. Keep water by your bed and sip on it throughout the day. Keeping topped up and staying hydrated will help prevent other symptoms like headaches and sore throats from worsening. Make this water extra cold by asking an adult to store it in the fridge overnight.
5. Put ice cold water in a hot water bottle. This is especially useful if you know that you'll be alone for long periods on a hot day, as it is a long lasting cooling technique that will help you for ages without the need to move!
6. Keep your curtains drawn – even in daylight. It helps to block out the heat and keeps your room cool. Be extra sneaky and keep the windows open behind your curtain and a gap in the middle so the cool air can still get through. Or go one extra and cover your windows in tin foil. This reflects the heat back to the outside and stops it from entering your room.
7. Wear appropriate clothing – this might be the perfect time for a wardrobe cull! Put away those winter PJs and invest in a cooler nightdress or a summer shortie set. Surely there's no excuse for shopping like the weather?

Outside:

- Stay in the shade - the sun is great for short periods but keep sunbathing time to a maximum of 20 minutes and avoid the sun between 11am – 3pm when the rays are at their strongest. And be mindful of your own symptoms – just because it's sunny doesn't mean you have to be outside all day! Managing your symptoms is far more important than having a tan. Plus, you can still get

the health benefits of the outdoors (like fresh air, warmth, and observing the greenery) by staying in the shade.

- Wear sunglasses – this is really important as it can help manage light sensitivity. The sun is bright and dazzling and can be painful if given too much exposure. Plus, they'll make you look extra fashionable!
- Make sure you wear sun cream – Yes I know it's boring, but M.E./C.F.S. can increase skin sensitivity and make you more prone to burning, meaning its extra important to wear sun cream. Make sure you apply it at least 20 minutes before you go out in the sun, and remember to reapply it every 2/3 hours for as long as you stay outside.