

# Climate Risk? Climate Ready!

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Summers are getting longer and hotter. We all need to prepare ourselves, our homes and our neighbourhoods for more hot and very hot days (days over 35 degrees).

**This pamphlet has tips to**

1. help you prepare for the heat, and
2. stay cool on a hot day.



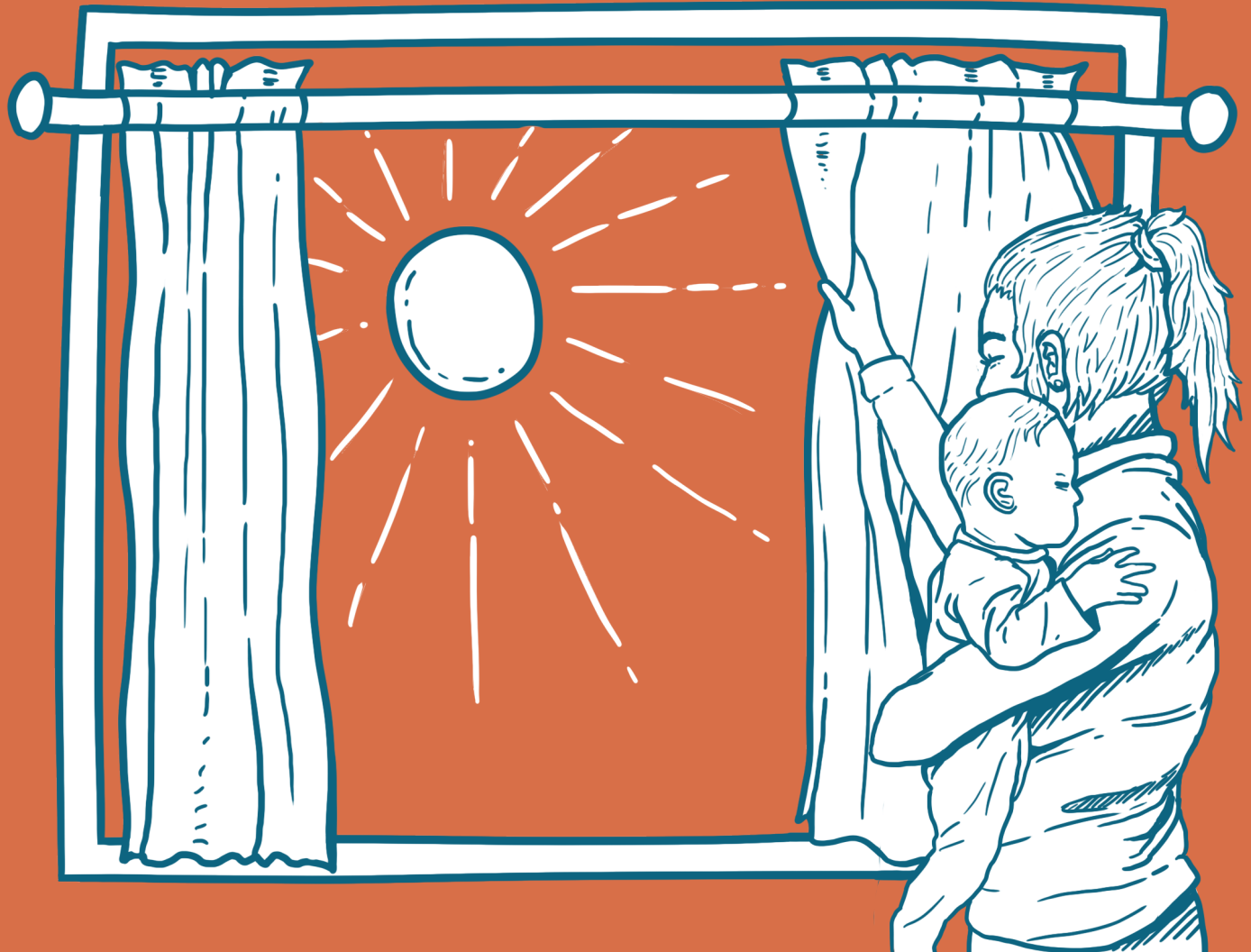
# 1. Preparing for heat

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There are lots of things you can do to get you and your home ready for the heat.

Shade is an important part of creating more comfortable living spaces. Are there rooms in your house that get a lot of afternoon sun in summer? You can take these actions to help make your house more comfortable using shade.

- Plant trees that will grow to shade your home.
- Place potted plants outside the windows to create a green screen.
- Attach external awnings to shade windows from summer sun (or ask your landlord to).
- For a low-cost temporary solution, attach light coloured shade cloth outside the window using removeable hooks, where appropriate.
- Install heavy drapes or blinds inside (plantation shutters are very good but expensive).
- Other creative window coverings can also help cut the heat (blankets, or even aluminium foil).

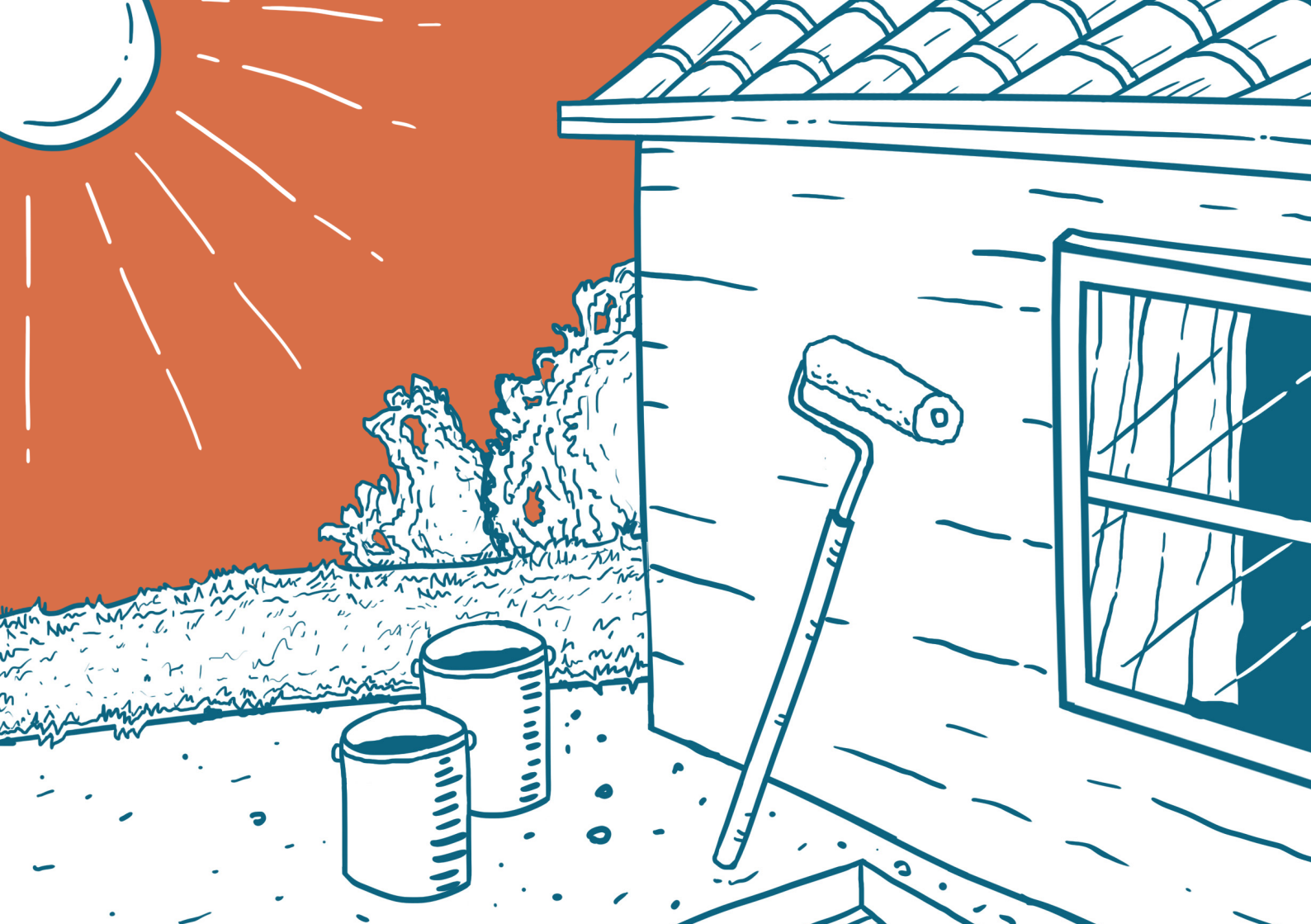


# Insulation and materials

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## Is the shell of your home heat ready?

- Is your home insulated? You can check for ceiling insulation by looking in the attic (only if you can easily get up there!). If renting, ask your landlord. You may also need to check with your landlord about whether there is wall insulation. If there is no insulation, can you install or ask your landlord to install it?
- What colour is your house? Light-coloured walls and roofs will reflect the heat and keep you cooler inside (can you or your landlord paint dark surfaces in a lighter colour?)
- Does a lot of heat come in through your windows? In addition to blinds and shutters, window film (which can be sourced at hardware stores) can be applied to standard glass to help reduce indoor heat.
- Bare floors (whether timber, tile or concrete) are cooler than carpeted floors, especially if you can shade them from sunlight.

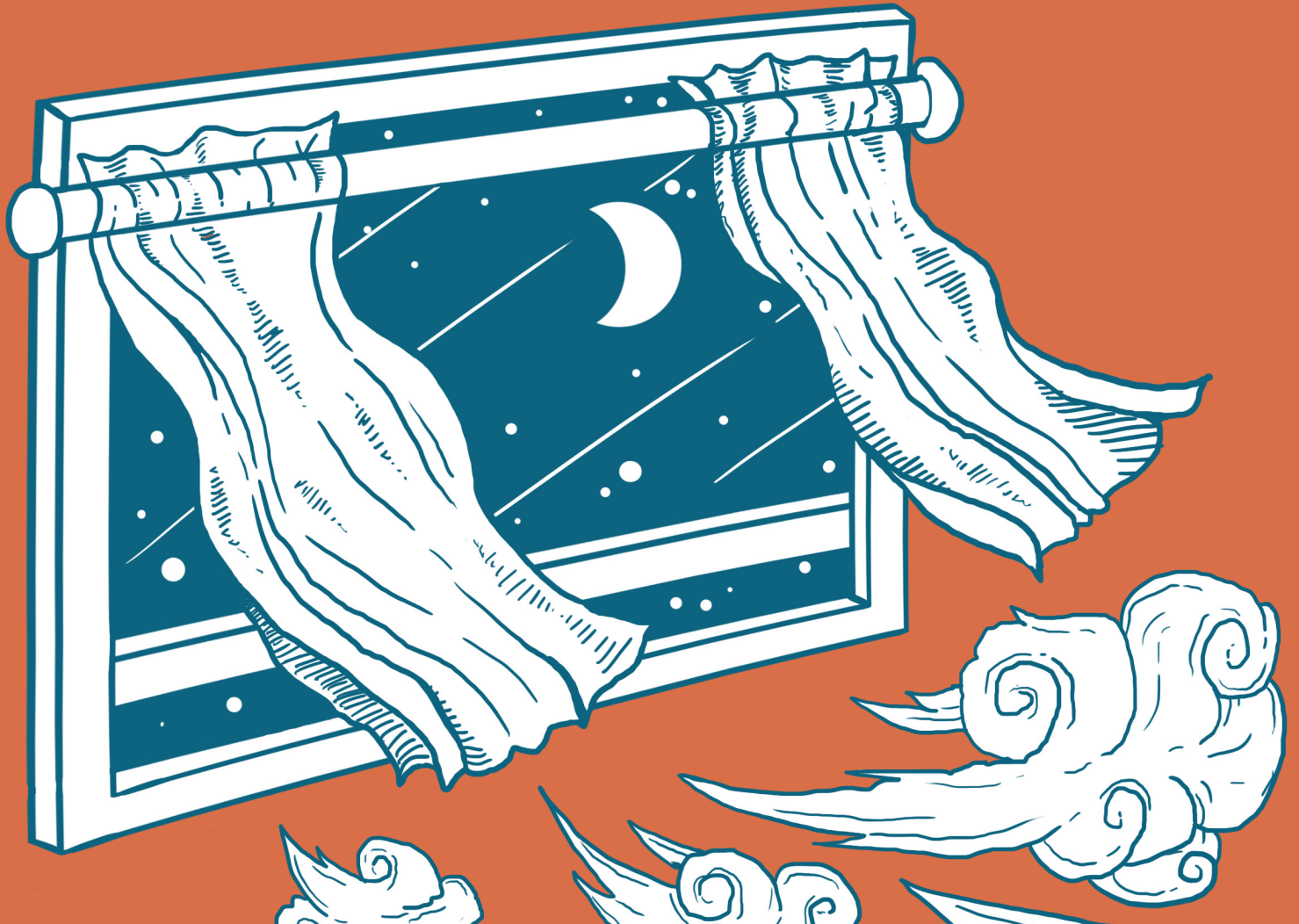


# Ventilation and night security

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One of the best ways to cool your home is to open it up at night.

- Do you have windows and doors that can be opened to air the house overnight? If you are concerned about security, look for windows that can be locked open or windows with flyscreen and security grilles. (Can you or your landlord install window locks or fly screens?)
- A temporary low cost solution can be a mosquito net over the windows or around the bed.



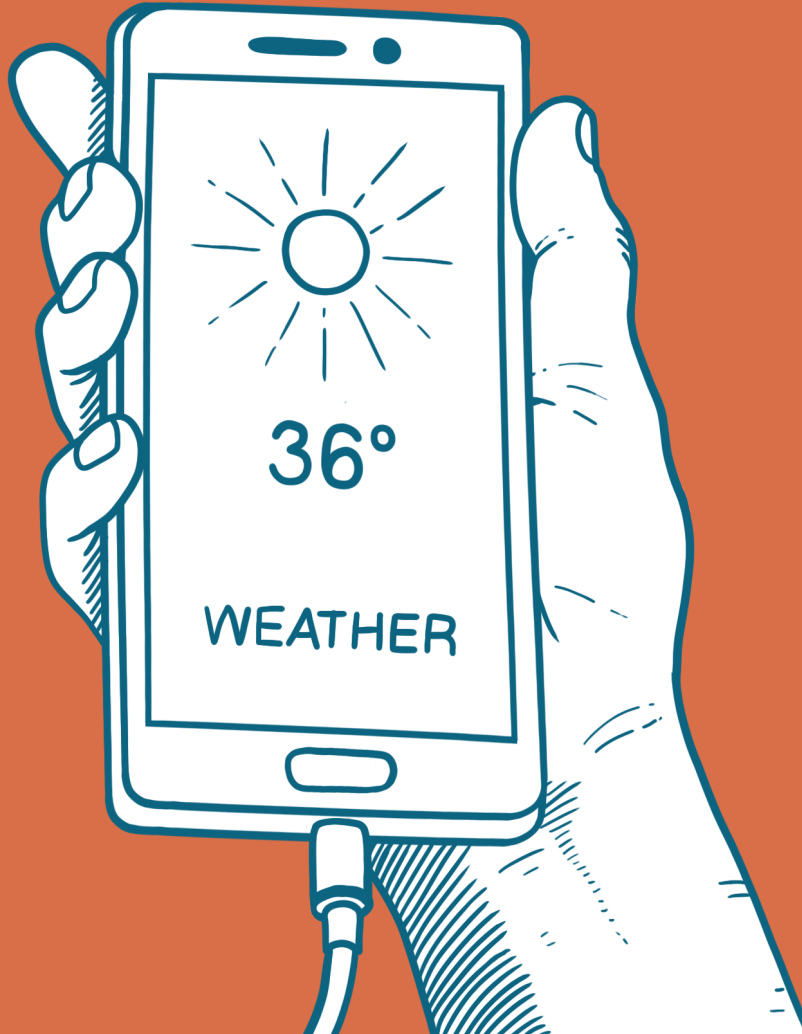
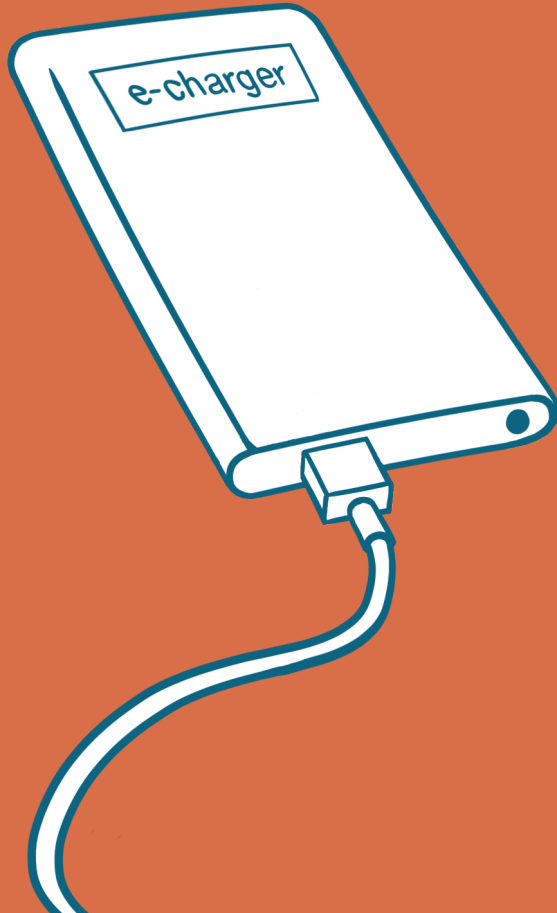
# Connectivity

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When it gets hot, you need to be able to stay in touch with your community and emergency services.

- Do you have digital access at home or near home? What is your backup if the power goes out?
- Do you know where to find weather information or local weather alerts and warnings?
- Do you have a radio that can work without mains power (make sure you have batteries!)
- Do you have a phone you can use if the power goes down? How about a portable phone charger?



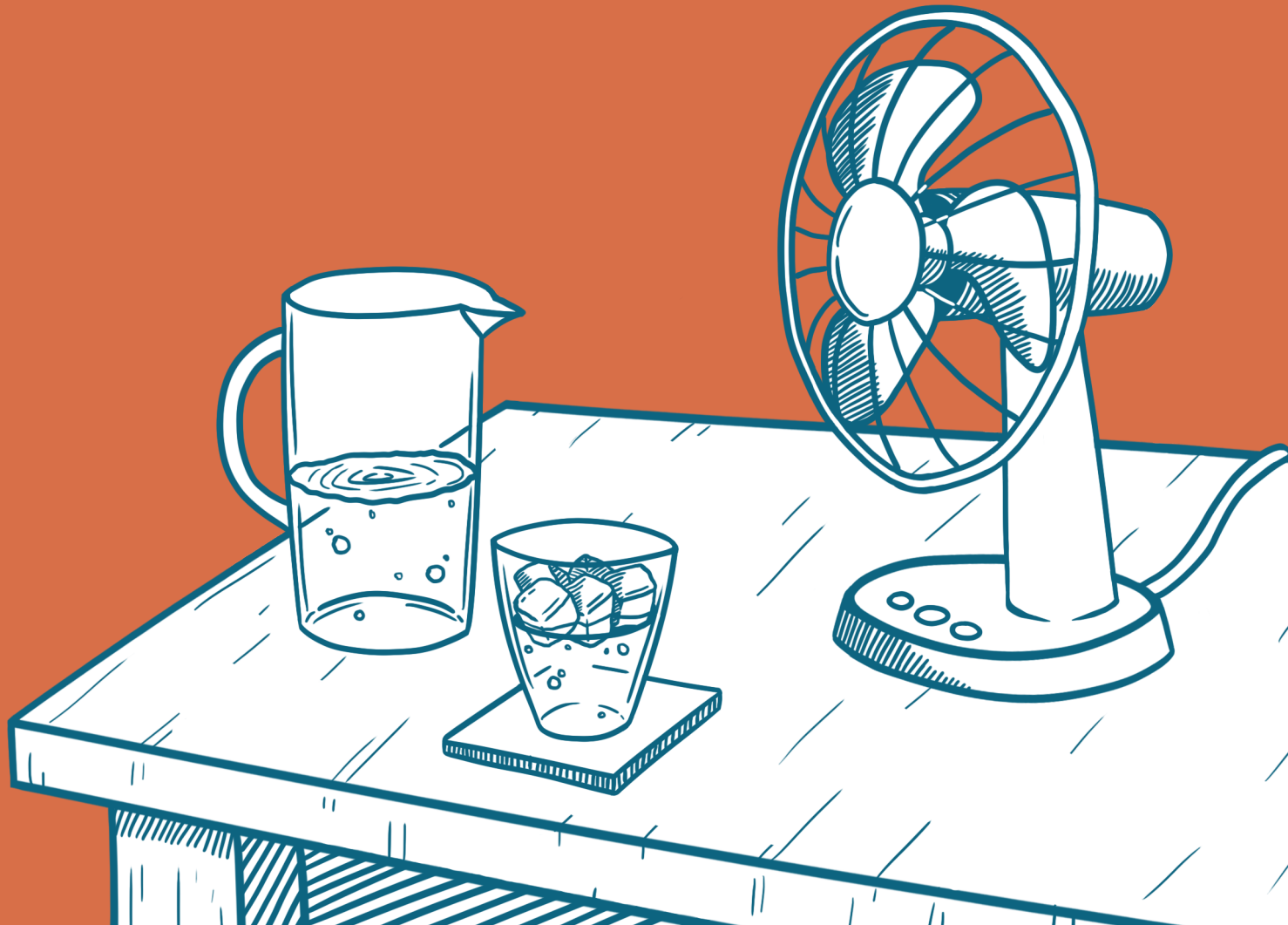


# Things you might need

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When it gets hot, having the following low-cost resources to hand could help you be more comfortable at home (how to use these resources is explained in 'what you can do when it's hot')

- Do you have ceiling or portable fans? Portable fans are one of the best ways to cool your body when it's hot. Check these are working and free of dust.
- Can internal doors be shut effectively? Closing off hot spaces can help keep the inside of your home cooler.
- Do you have ice trays and/or containers to freeze water? (e.g. cake tins are a good option)
- Do you have face cloths, towels, and sheets that can be soaked in water?



# Cooling refuges

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If your home gets uncomfortably hot, cooling refuges are places you can go in your neighbourhood to cool down, for example your local library or swimming pool.

- Are there cooling refuges within 5 minutes of home? If you don't know, ask your local council where these are and when they are open.



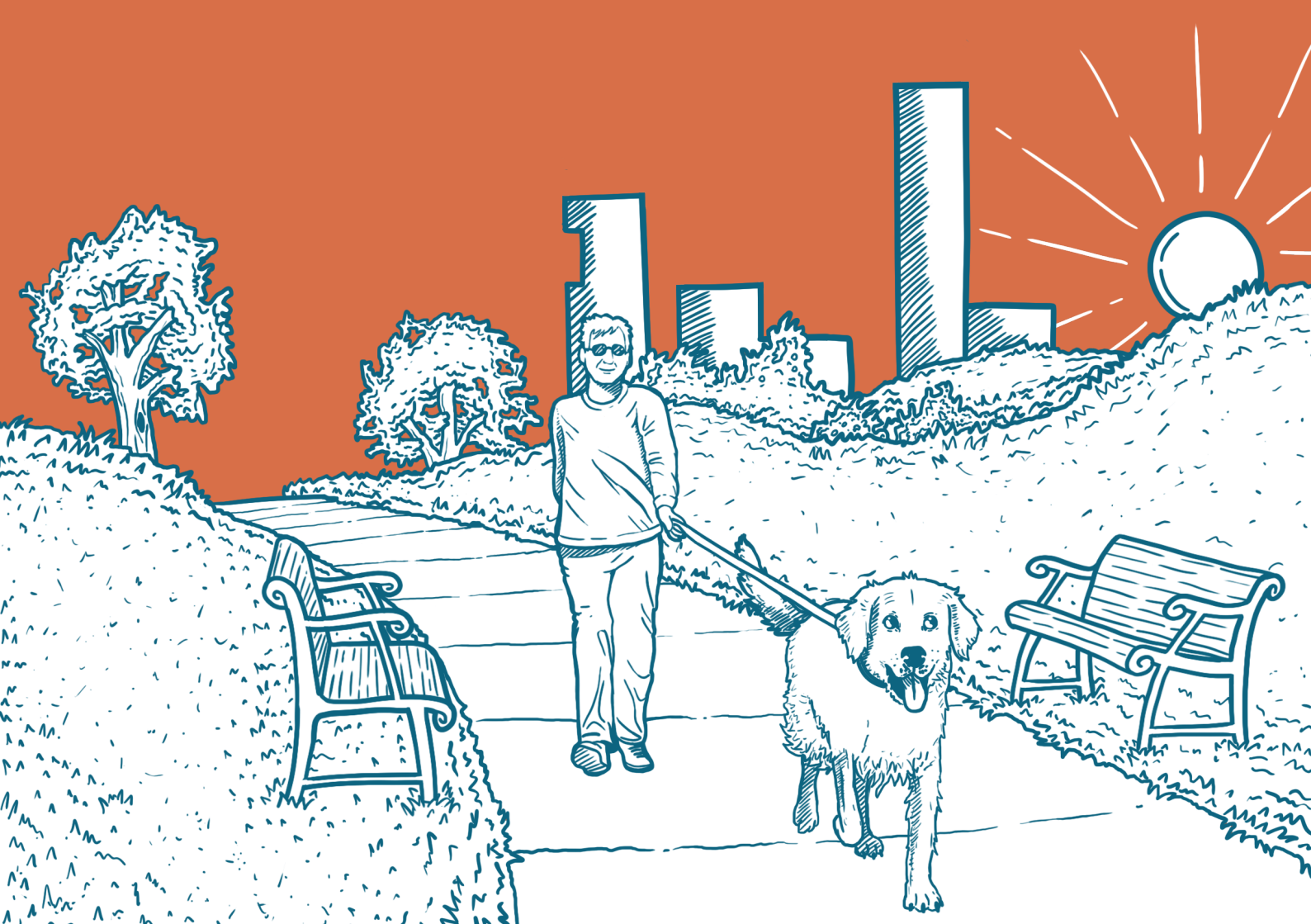
# 2. What you can do when it's hot

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Summer is here, you've checked your local weather alerts and it's going to be really hot. What can you do to stay safe and as comfortable as possible?

**Morning** This is likely to be the coolest time of the day, so it's the best time to be active.

- Open up your doors and windows to let the cooler morning air in.
- If possible, get up and out early so you can move while the day is young. Take the dog for a walk, take the kids to the park. If you can, go for a swim.
- Do your cleaning, cooking or outside work now, if possible. Plan meals that don't require an oven.



# As it heats up

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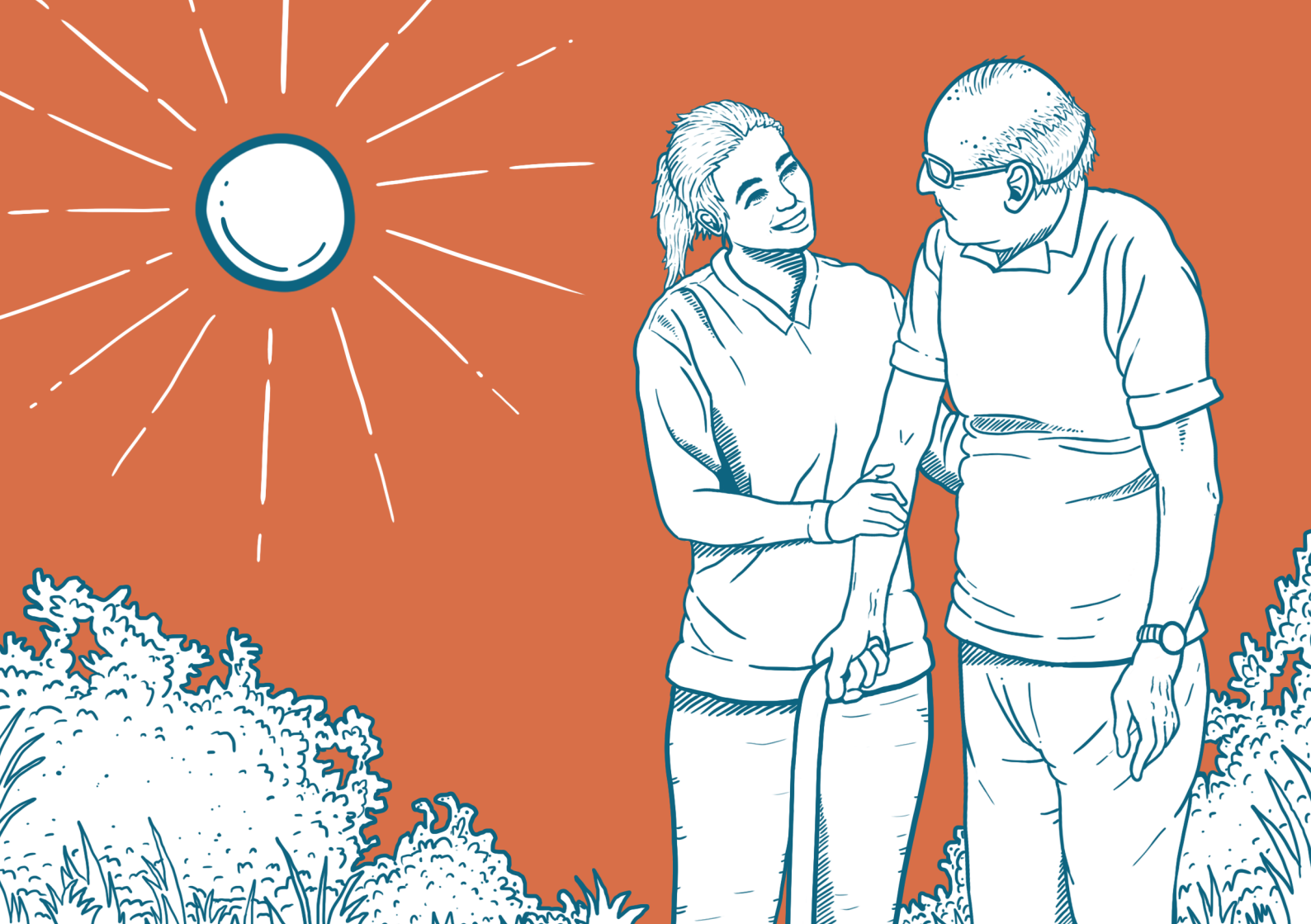
Here's what you can do to make yourself and your home more comfortable.

- Shut windows, blinds, and curtains before it gets really hot (this could be as early as 9am on really hot days). If you are heading out for the day, do this before you leave home.
- Pull down any external shades and shut internal doors to keep the heat out of your living spaces or bedrooms.
- Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Put a jug of tap water in the fridge and remember to top it up.
- Use fans to cool yourself and others. Remember - fans cool bodies, not rooms. If you are leaving a room, turn the fan off or you're just wasting electricity!



- To be even cooler, direct your fan so that it blows air towards you across a container of ice. You can also hang a damp sheet or wet washing in front of (not over) your fan; for example, on a clothes airer or over a table. This is evaporative cooling and it won't work on humid days. (Make sure the wet items are properly wrung out and not touching the fan).
- To be the coolest, run cold water over your wrists or ankles, or place a wet cloth on wrists, ankles, forehead, or the back of your neck. You could also place your feet in a bucket with cool water. Throw some ice in!
- If you need to use air-conditioning, try to save it for the hottest parts of the day. It will be most effective and cheapest to run if your home is well insulated and you've closed it up for the day.

- Remember, your pets need to be kept cool on hot days too. Check that their water bowls and baths are full and out of the sun. You can put ice in the bowls in the morning, or place containers of frozen water where pets can reach them. Make sure any day beds are in the shade all day.
- If your home is uncomfortably hot, are there cool refuges you can go to (rivers, pool, beach, library, cinema, shopping centre)? If you don't have access to a car or public transport, is there a community bus that can take you? Check with your local council.
- If you are going out, cover up in lightweight, loose-fitting and long sleeve garments, preferably in breathable natural, rather than synthetic fabrics. Make sure you have a wide-brimmed hat, sunscreen and a water bottle you can refill.
- Remember that very young, elderly, or frail people are usually more affected by the heat, so they may need to cool down sooner than you do. Make sure to check on them as the day warms up and throughout the day. They can also cool down faster, so keep checking on them once it's cooling down too!



# Evening

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Hopefully the heat is letting up so here's how you can take advantage of that.

- As soon as it's cooler outside than in, or if a cool breeze is starting, open your windows, curtains and doors to cool your home down. Make sure you check! If you stay inside a hot, closed-up house or apartment you might miss the relief of an afternoon breeze or a welcome southerly buster. If you are in an apartment, talk to your neighbours about them opening their windows and doors too. Creating cross-ventilation throughout the building will help cool everything down.
- If your home is still uncomfortable, find out what's happening in your local area. Water parks? Community cook outs? Outdoor cinemas? Night markets? Arrange an evening picnic! We can learn to use our public areas more during the cool of the evening like many European and South East Asian cultures do.
- Too hot to sleep? Take a cool shower or bath or go for a swim if you can. Make yourself more comfortable in bed by using fans and keeping your windows open if possible.
- Remember to use those mosquito nets!



## **For further information please visit:**

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/beattheheat/Pages/default.aspx>

This material was developed by Dr Abby Mellick Lopes, Dr Louise Crabtree, and Dr Emma Power as part of Western Sydney University's Cooling the Commons research project. Illustrations by Thomas Baldwin ([thomas.baldwin1239@gmail.com](mailto:thomas.baldwin1239@gmail.com)).

## **Find out more here:**

<https://www.facebook.com/EarthIQ/videos/how-can-we-stay-cool-without-contributing-to-climate-change/2316060195070627/>

## **Here is the link to our Report:**

[https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/1161470/cooling-the-commons-report.pdf](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1161470/cooling-the-commons-report.pdf)

**\*Disclaimer:** The pamphlet gives general information and guidance about how to keep yourself and your home cool on hot days. You may need to seek specific guidance for your own circumstances. If your home is rented, you will need to discuss the suggestions with your landlord. The authors and Western Sydney University do not accept any liability for any claims where specific advice is not obtained.