

CLIMATE WELLBEING SERIES



# How to Cool Down in Extreme Heat





HEATWAVES are one of the fastest-growing climate health and wellbeing hazards for communities around the world.

HEATWAVES can increase experiences of stress, anxiety, irritability, gender violence, depression, exhaustion, dehydration, heat cramps, heat-stroke, fainting, kidney stress, and loss of life.

Feeling irritable, frustrated, anxious, and even angry can be common feelings connected to experiencing heat-related impacts.

Learning pathways to wellbeing during an extreme heat event can help to support individual and community agency, mental and physical health and even save lives.



# Heat Coping Strategies

## *Individual Level*

**\*\*Remember to use water respectfully when engaging water strategies\*\***



Wet a shirt with water and wear it. Wet the shirt as needed to help stay cool.



Freeze a plastic water bottle, then wrap in a tea towel and hold it close to you to cool down.



Take a short, cold bath or shower to cool down.



Fill a bucket or bowl with cold water and soak feet or hands for short bursts.



Wet a cloth, towel or bed sheet with water and drape over your neck, shoulders or body.

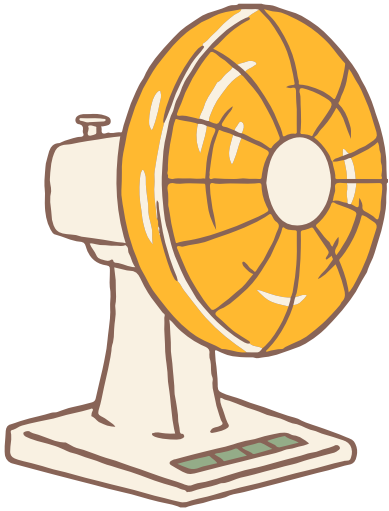


fill a spray bottle with cold water and mist arms, legs, face. Can be done in front of a fan.

# Heat Coping Strategies

## *Individual Level*

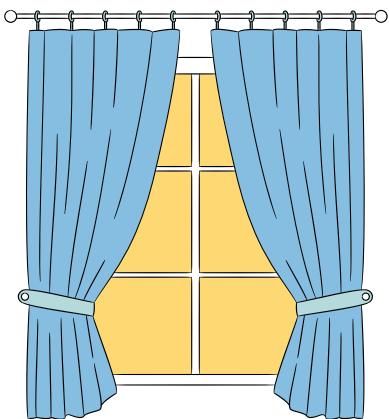
**\*\*Remember, no single strategy can ensure safe cooling. Multiple strategies may be needed \*\***



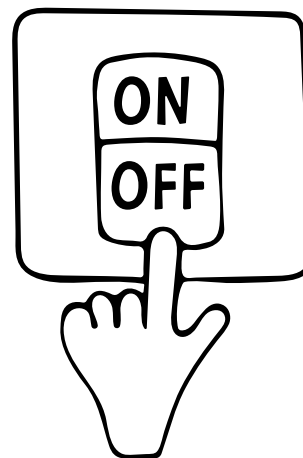
Use fans to help promote air circulation and cross breeze in your space.



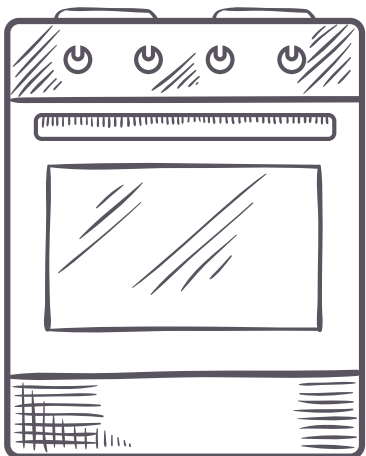
If applicable and safe, downstairs or basement spaces might be cooler for sleeping.



Cover sun-facing windows with thick blinds or tinfoil to block solar heat.



Turn off any non-essential electronics or lights that can add heat to a space.



Try not to turn on ovens or dryers during hottest parts of the day.

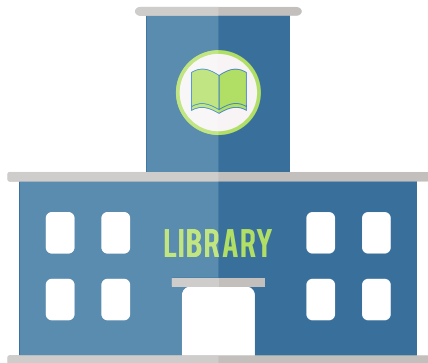


Limit outdoor activity during the hottest part of the day (11-4) and stay HYDRATED with cool, non-alcoholic liquids.

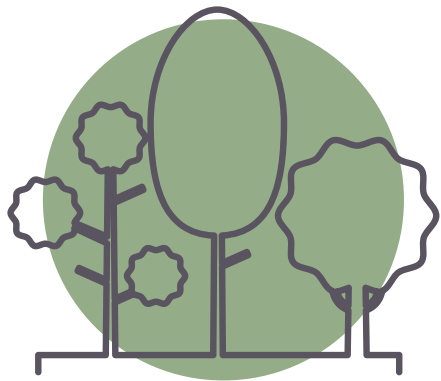


# Heat Coping Strategies

## *Community Level*



Visit public spaces like libraries or malls with air conditioning.



Visit public spaces like parks, pools or lakes that offer shade or cooling breezes.



Use shaded routes if possible when navigating outside. Use a hat or umbrella to help block direct sun.



Look for city misting stations or pop-up cooling tents to cool down in the streets.

# Heat Coping Strategies

## *Community Level*



Donate bottled water, sun-screen and hats to local shelters.



Never leave people or pets in vehicles in hot weather.



Put water out for birds and other creatures. They need water and cooling too.



Call on cities to mobilize equitably located cooling and water stations.



Call on your city to develop and mobilize an extreme heat community ACTION PLAN that works to coordinate different departments & organizations to work together to mitigate heat related risks and harms.



# Heat Coping Strategies

## *Systemic Level*



Support energy systems transition away from fossil fuels towards renewables.



Check on neighbours and apply intersectional disability analysis as part of equity and community building.



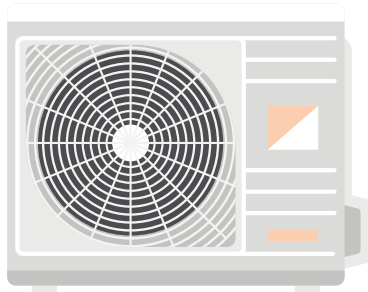
Support community divestment from the fossil fuel industry.



Promote long-term urban forestry with heat and drought-tolerant trees.



Focus on building equitable greenspace & tree canopy to foster safer & more resilient neighbourhoods for all.



Support mass mobilization of heat-pump subsidies from governments.

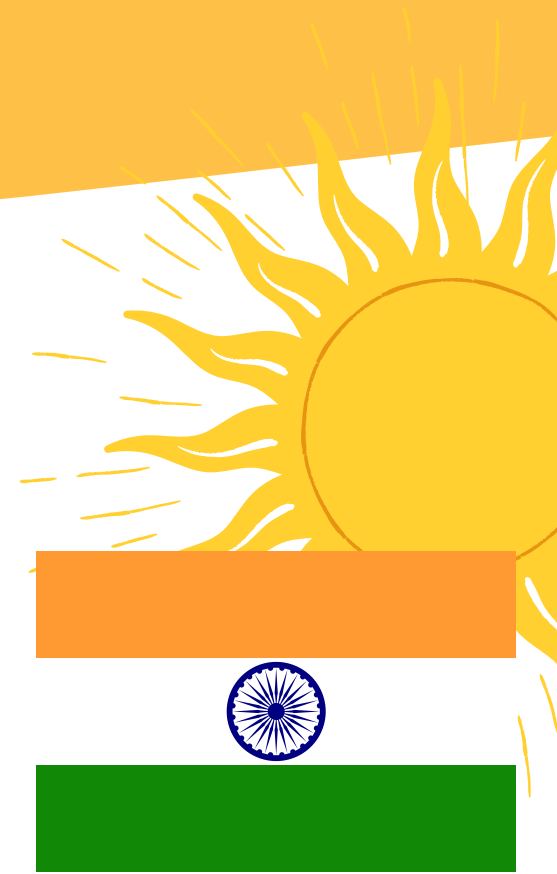


Policies must prioritize historically under-served areas & populations harmed by systemic oppression, inequitable policies and wealth inequality

# Learning from Others & Knowledge Sharing

A 2021 global study by The Lancet found India had the highest burden of mortality associated with high temperatures between 2000 and 2019.

Extreme heat events in Ahmedabad prompted scientists from NRDC, the Indian Institute of Public Health, India Meteorological Department & Ahmedabad Municipal officials to develop India's first heat action plan specifically tailored for a city in 2013.



## The Plan Included:

- early warning systems
- colour-coded temperature alerts
- community outreach programs
- capacity-building networks among government and health professionals for preparedness
- reducing community exposure
- staggered or reduced hours for schools and factories.
- appointing an office to coordinate the heat action plan with various agencies



- "Specifically Tailored Action Plans Combat Heat Waves in India," Deepa Padmanaban. August 11, 2021.
- "Climate Emergency: Extreme Heat and Air Quality Mitigation," Vancouver City Planning Commission. July 5, 2021.
- "Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Inequities, Responses," American Psychological Association. 2021 Edition
- "Keep Your Cool in Hot Weather," Center for Disease Control and Prevention. 2021.
- "Tips to stay safe, cool during extreme heatwave," Government of British Columbia. 2021.
- "Preparing for dangerous heat," BC Center for Disease Control. July 2021.
- "Global, regional, and national burden of mortality associated with non-optimal ambient temperatures from 2000 to 2019: a three-stage modelling study," The Lancet. July 2021.

This Climate Wellbeing Series resource curated by Meghan Wise, UBC Climate Hub Coordinator and co-founder of the Climate Wellbeing Series