

Replace Your Roof for El Niño Now, Lower Your Energy Bill All Year

An aging roof might make things tough during El Niño, the weather system that forecasters predict will bring a wetter-than-normal winter to California this year. Cracks in your roof could lead to water damage, mold, ruined attic insulation, heat loss, or worse.

If you're thinking of replacing your old roof, you might consider getting one that not only keeps you warm and dry this winter, they may help lower your energy bill.

Energy-Efficient Cool Roofs

Like other roofing options, cool roofs will help protect you from the elements. But they have an added benefit: energy efficiency on sunny days. The shingles, tiles or other materials of a cool roof are designed to reflect the sun's rays, radiating any absorbed heat back to the sky and preventing the heat from penetrating into your home during the summer months.

Think of it this way: if you wear a black shirt on a hot day, the dark color absorbs the heat. That's why so many of us wear white or light-colored shirts when the sun is blazing – to reflect the heat.

A traditional dark roof can reach temperatures of 150° F or more under the hot sun, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). A cool roof, on the other hand, can lower the temperature by more than 50° F, resulting in a 10-15% reduction in air conditioning costs on those sweltering summer days, saving you money on your utility bills.

A cool roof can also last longer than a traditional dark-colored roof, because the lower surface temperature does less damage to the materials over the long run.

Cool Roofs: A Variety of Materials and Colors

Cool roofs come in various materials, from fiberglass asphalt shingles to tiles made of clay, slate or concrete. Metal roofs are also popular. While many of these roof types are already energy-efficient and meet the DOE's cool-roof standards, a protective coating containing special reflective pigments can further reduce the surface temperature and boost your roof's efficiency even more.

And if you're worried about appearance, cool roofs are available in a variety of colors, enhancing your home's curb appeal.

Are Cool Roofs More Expensive?

If the technology and options that come with a cool roof sound like something that will cost you more, think again. According to the DOE, replacing your old roof with a cool roof is no more expensive than using a non-cool-roof material.

Plus, if you qualify for energy rebates and incentives or you opt to finance your roof through special programs provided by your local government, you could save even more.

So...Are You Roof-Ready for El Niño?

With so little rain during the California drought, you may not have given much thought to your old roof. But with El Niño upon us, there's never been a better time to upgrade. Cool roofs look good, cost the same, and can help lower your energy bill.