

Are Ductless Mini Splits the Right Choice for Me?



By Gordon White

Many homeowners are accustomed to using an air conditioner to cool their home in the summer and a furnace to heat their home in the winter. Ductless mini splits, in the right applications, can offer both heating and cooling in the same unit. It might be worth seeing whether a ductless mini split is the right choice for you.

What is a Mini Split, and How Does It Work?

A mini split heats and cools the home without the use of ductwork (hence the name “ductless”). One part of the equipment goes outside the home while the other part goes inside, and the system pumps refrigerant between both parts to achieve heating and cooling. For heating, the mini split takes warmth from the outside air and transfers it indoors. For cooling, the equipment takes heat from inside and expels it outdoors.

Advantages of Ductless Mini Splits

Mini splits offer numerous advantages for homeowners. The technology has been around for decades, constantly improving.

For the environmentally conscious homeowner, mini splits operate efficiently off electricity instead of fossil fuels. Gas furnaces, in contrast, operate off of natural gas, so mini splits offer a comfort solution in areas where there are residential gas hookup restrictions.

Mini splits can also integrate with other existing technology. They can be paired with UV LED lights to purify the air while also heating/cooling it. These lights, in conjunction with filters, can reduce unwanted particles in the air (like dust) and help neutralize floating viruses, bacteria, and other harmful contaminants. The equipment can work alongside smart devices for easy control and remote adjusting of temperature.

They also offer a solution as an add-on to a current system. They can reduce the load on the furnace in the winter and allow for more control over individual rooms. Multiple indoor units can be placed around the home for zone-specific heating and cooling. If a previously unused room was recently transitioned into a home gym, for example, a ductless unit can be placed in it to ensure the temperature and humidity are precisely controlled. Or if a child recently went off to college, the users could shut off a/c to that room if it is no longer needed, saving utility costs.

Dispelling Myths

Some people do not like the idea of having a mini split unit hanging on their wall, but manufacturers have put in work so that the units are aesthetically pleasing, blending into the appearance of the room and perhaps even adding to it. In one case, the units are made to appear like picture frames, and the homeowner can choose which image to feature in the frame.

A variety of rebates and discounts are often offered to drive the price of the equipment down, too. Sometimes these rebates come from the manufacturers, some from the utility company, and some in the form of tax credits. In the right circumstances, all three rebates can occur at once.

For those who have heard of ductless mini splits over the past decade or two, there was once a notion that the equipment could cool well but would not be able to provide enough heat in cold winters. This was true to a degree, but technology has advanced in such a way that ductless mini splits have become far, far more competent at handling cold weather.