

NO COST & LOW COST TIPS



INSULATION

- Check your loft and cavity walls are insulated to current building regulations (depth of 270mm/11" for loft insulation). If your property has cavity walls they can usually be insulated at low cost and installing both measures in a poorly insulated home could save up to £250 per year on your fuel bills! Grants may be available to assist with the cost of installing these measures, to find out more call Act on Energy Free on **0800 988 2881**.
- Draught-proofing could save £20 per year on your energy bills. Fit keyhole covers and draught-proofing brushes to internal doors & letterboxes. Install a chimney balloon in unused chimneys and seal gaps between floorboards and skirting boards using a flexible sealant.

HEATING

If you are fit, healthy and live in a comfortable, well heated home, the chances are you will not feel at risk from the cold. However, there are certain groups of people who should take special care during the winter to ensure they keep warm, including the elderly, young children, disabled or those with pre-existing health conditions. These groups may be eligible for discounts to enable them to keep warm and well, contact energy supplier for more details. Most households will benefit from the following tips:-

- Turning the thermostat down by 1° C can reduce your fuel bill by up to 10%. Recommended temperatures are 21° C in living rooms and 18° C in halls and bedrooms.
- Time the heating to come on around ½ an hour before you get up/return home and to go off around ½ an hour before you go out/go to bed. During an average winter, there is usually no need to have heating on when you are out at work or in bed at night if you are fit and healthy.
- Remember to change programmers and timers when the clocks go back or forward an hour.
- For frost protection in winter, set room thermostats to a low setting (4°C or 40°F) if you go away on holiday. Check your insurance, you may be required to drain your heating system when you away during the winter.
- Turn thermostats down or heating off rather than open windows to cool down rooms which get too hot.
- Check furniture isn't too close to radiators or storage heaters, this blocks heat from the rest of the room.
- Fit shelves above and reflective panels behind radiators to deflect warm air into the middle of the room rather than allowing it to rise through the ceiling or walls. Reflective panels can be purchased from DIY stores or made from kitchen foil stuck to cardboard.
- Set Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRV's) to a low setting where less heat is needed, e.g. unused/spare rooms.
- Open internal doors of sunny rooms to let warmth travel through the house and try to use rooms which are naturally warmer during the daytime.
- If you have storage heaters make sure you are using the Input and Output dials correctly. Most storage heaters need to be operated manually daily. During winter, the Input Dial should ideally be set on the highest setting to store the maximum amount of heat overnight using cheaper Off Peak electricity. The Output Dial should be set to a low setting to release stored heat slowly throughout the day. Adjust Output to a higher setting if additional heat is required but remember to switch it down before you go to bed. Some storage heaters have a separate convector heater which can be switched on if additional heat is required, these use On Peak (daytime) electric which is more expensive, so should only be used for short periods of time and then switched off to avoid high energy bills.
- Limit the use of plug in electric heaters, these use On Peak electricity and are always more expensive than gas.

HOT WATER

- Set tank thermostat to no more/less than 60°C, this destroys bacteria and is hot enough for bathing/cleaning.
- Check you are not using an electric immersion heater in addition to a gas boiler for your hot water.
- If you are on Economy 7, heat water during Off Peak hours and only use the boost switch if you run out.
- If your hot water can be timed separately from your heating, set the timer to heat water when you need it and to go off when the water gets up to temperature (Approximately 1 hour).
- Fitting an insulating jacket to your hot water cylinder, even if it already has foam insulation, is a cheap way to save money on your heating bills and will pay for itself in just a few months.

COOKING

- When filling the kettle, only boil as much water as you need. More water = more electricity = more money!
- Cook several dishes at the same time in the oven, freezing the extra portions.
- Match the size of the pan to the size of the ring.
- Put lids on pans, and turn down the heat to a gentle simmer, this will reduce condensation as well as energy consumption. Cut up food into small pieces to cook quickly.
- Cook small items like chops under the grill, rather than in the oven.
- Toasters use less energy than the grill. Fan ovens, pressure cookers, microwaves and slow cookers are more efficient methods of cooking. Salads use no power at all and are healthy too!

APPLIANCES

- Plan ironing to do the low temperature first and do one long session rather than short ones.
- Steam irons use more power than dry irons so iron clothes damp instead – a plant sprayer is handy to dampen the clothes.
- De-scale kettles regularly.
- Wait until dishwashers and washing machines are full before using them.
- Use manual rather than power tools in the kitchen and garden whenever possible.
- When replacing appliances, look for the most energy efficient ones, which are cheaper to run. Look for A rated energy labels on fridges, freezers, washing machines and tumble-dryers. Look for Energy Efficient labels on other appliances. A new efficient model could reduce the amount of energy used by 50%.
- Buy equipment sized to meet your needs. A fridge or dishwasher which usually runs half-empty is wasteful.

FRIDGES & FREEZERS

- Check and adjust the temperature of fridges and freezers, they should be between 0° to 4° C for fridges, or -18° C (4 star) for freezers.
- Keep fridge and freezer $\frac{3}{4}$ full, but leave gaps around food for the cold air to circulate. Fill empty spaces in freezers with empty boxes or cartons with lids on, bottles of water (not completely filled) or newspapers.
- Leave space behind and around fridges and freezers to allow the warm air to escape. Consider fitting a vent at the back or in the worktops over them.

WASHING

- Heating the water in your tank is cheaper than heating it in your washing machine (unless you are using peak rate electricity for heating your tank), so check your washing machine instructions to make best use of this and best use of economy settings.
- Try to dry clothes naturally out doors rather than using a tumble dryer.
- Avoid drying clothes on radiators as this causes condensation and damages surface decoration.

ECONOMY 7

- If you use cheaper **off peak** rate electricity at night (Economy 7) fit plug-in timers so that washing, drying, dishwashing and charging phones can be done overnight. Ensure you fit a smoke detector nearby for safety.
- The 7 cheaper off peak hours are usually between 12.30am - 7.30am in winter, and 1.30am- 8.30am in summer. The rest of the day are **peak hours** and can cost twice as much,
- If your home is all electric and you don't have an Economy 7 meter fitted talk to your energy supplier about getting one, it will save you money.

LIGHTING

- Use low energy bulbs – they use only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the amount of energy of an ordinary bulb and they last up to eight times longer. LED bulbs are more expensive but save even more and last 25 times longer.
- If you have outside security lighting which is left on for several hours, consider fitting a light with a sensor or where possible use an energy saving light bulb this will work out to be a lot more cost-effective.
- Dimmers will reduce the amount of light but don't save much energy.

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