

HOW TO SAVE ENERGY IN YOUR HOME

Although in general, the UK energy bills have been rising, you could actually save money by using energy more efficiently throughout your home by simple changes to your daily routine, this could have a cost-saving result on your heating and electricity bills.

By applying simplistic energy saving improvements in your home will not only make your home more comfortable, but can also deliver long-term energy and financial savings.

Below are energy saving tips which you may find useful.

- 1. Insulating your home** – Most UK homes do not have the recommended amount of insulation. Insulating your home is a cost efficient way of keeping heat in and energy bills down. Fitting loft insulation alone can save you heating costs. The recommended amount to insulate your loft properly is 270mm. Any less and you are losing energy through your roof. Fitting insulation can be easy and is inexpensive.
- 2. Fit a jacket on your hot water tank** – Treating your cylinder to a new winter jacket, could reduce any unnecessary chills and bills this winter. Fitting a British Standard ‘Jacket’ around your cylinder could cut heat loss by over 75%, keep your water warmer for longer, and reduce your heating bills. If you already have a cylinder jacket, check it is the recommended thickness of 75mm (3 inches). Setting the cylinder thermostat at around 60-degrees should be adequate for bathing and washing.
- 3. Regular Service of your boiler** – An old boiler can be less effective at heating your house, increasing energy wastage and costs! However, regular servicing in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions can keep it healthy for longer, helping steer clear of costly call outs when the weather cools down.
- 4. Use energy efficient light bulbs** – A simple and cost effective way to save energy in your home is to fit energy efficient bulbs. Incandescent light bulbs burn as much as 75% of the energy they use as heat. Energy efficient light bulbs use up to 80% less electricity than standard bulbs and can last up to ten times longer, giving you some significant energy savings. These can be inexpensive to purchase and widely available in a variety of shapes and shades to suit your home. Typically 30% of your annual electricity bill may be spent on lighting your home.
- 5. Switch off standby** – Appliances left on standby still use around 85% of energy to keep them powered down. Leaving appliances on standby also significantly reduces the life of your appliances long-term. Appliances like mobile phones, laptops and iPod chargers,

still consume power when plugged into the wall with the switch on, even when no device is connected. Simply switching off and unplugging items on standby is an easy way to be more energy efficient and helps save energy and cost.

6. **Keep the heat in** – Keeping the heat inside will stop the need to have heating on longer, helping energy savings and being more energy efficient! One of the cheapest ways to save energy is to stop draughts. If you can feel cold air, then warm air is escaping! Draught excluders for windows and doors and letterbox brushes can stop winds cooling down your temperatures. Thick curtains can prevent warm air escaping and reduce chills from the windows at night, keeping your house hotter for longer. Turning down heating controls and adjusting radiator valves will avoid over-heating rooms that do not need it. The advised temperature for your home is 21 degrees for living rooms, 18 degrees for bedrooms and 16 degrees for hallways.
7. **Do not overfill your kettle** – Kettles use a lot of energy to boil water. Over filling the kettle is a big energy waster, as more water means more energy and more power to boil it. You can save energy by boiling just the amount you need, measure what you require in the cup you intend to drink from, and allow an extra half cup on top of the total for evaporation. This should avoid wasting energy boiling water you do not need.
8. **Assess your energy usage** – One of the easiest ways you can be more energy efficient is to assess what energy you are using and target the appliances using the most energy. Energy monitors are useful to track your energy usage and highlight wasteful, inefficient appliances and can help to educate your family on energy saving habits, keeping your energy costs down.
9. **Central heating system** – If you have an old central heating system, consider having the radiators flushed to increase operational efficiency and reduce fuel bills. Avoid heating an empty house by using the energy timer so your central heating is switched off when nobody is home. Setting your heating to turn off one hour before you leave the house and just half an hour before your return may result in the heat not being wasted on an empty house. If you have radiator valves, you can also turn off radiators in rooms that are not being used.
10. **Dishwasher and tumble dryer** – When using dishwashers, washing machines and tumble dryers always use a full load, a half load or an economy programme. Always use the low temperature programme. Try not to use a tumble dryer unless absolutely necessary and do not put really wet clothes into the tumble dryer: wring them out or spin-dry them first.