

Energy saving tips

Cheap but simple tricks and tips to get your home back on the straight and narrow.

Things you can do today

- To eliminate draughts and wasted heat use an easy-to-fix brush or PVC seal on your exterior doors.
- Stop draughts and heat escaping through floorboards and skirting boards by filling gaps with newspaper, beading or sealant.
- Make sure your windows are draught proofed. A low cost, short-term alternative to double-glazing is to tape polythene across window frames.
- Heating: Too warm? Don't waste your money - turn your thermostat down by 1°C. It could cut your heating bills by up to 10%. And if you're going away for winter, leave the thermostat on a low setting to provide protection from freezing at minimum cost. Saving: around £30 per year.
- Hot water: Of course it should be hot, but it doesn't need to be scalding. For most people, setting the cylinder thermostat at 65°C is fine for bathing and washing. Saving: up to £10 per year
- Plug it: Always put the plug in your basin or sink. Leaving hot water taps running with it removed is akin to washing money down the plughole.
- Curtains: close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows.
- Lights: Always turn them off when you leave a room and adjust your curtains or blinds to let in as much light as possible during the day.
- Televisions, videos, stereos, computers, and cordless phones: To cut down on wasted energy, avoid leaving appliances on standby and remember not to leave them on charge unnecessarily. But check the operation manual to make sure that this won't reset the appliance's memory.
- Fridges: Don't leave the door open for longer than necessary, as cold air will escape. Avoid putting hot or warm food straight into the fridge; allow it to cool down first. Defrost your fridge regularly to keep it running efficiently and cheaply. If it tends to frost up quickly, check the door seal. And if you absolutely have to site your fridge next to a cooker or boiler, leave a good gap between them.
- Washing machines and tumble dryers: Always wash a full load and if you can't, use a half-load or economy programme if your machine has one. Always use the low temperature programme bearing in mind that modern washing powders will be just as effective at lower temperatures. And don't put really wet clothes into a tumble dryer; wring them out or spin-dry them first. It's much faster and it will save you money.
- Dishwashers: Try and use the low temperature programme, and ensure you wash a full load.

Cooking tips

- Cover saucepans with lids to reduce cooking time
- Save energy by using a steamer or segmented pans - you can cook two types of vegetables on one ring
- Where possible, cook small items under the grill instead of in the oven
- When boiling vegetables, use just enough water to keep them covered
- Many modern ovens, particularly those with fans, need little or no pre-heating

Things to remember

- It's very important to ensure that any appliance, including cookers or boilers, have enough ventilation to operate safely
- Do not block up existing air vents or grills, they are there to ensure there is enough ventilation
- Make sure any chimneys and flues being used by appliances burning fuel (gas, coal, oil, wood etc) are regularly swept and checked for blockages

Insulation

There are many different ways you can insulate your home and some methods cost as little as £5.

Insulating wall and loft spaces with Energy Efficiency Recommended products could reduce heat loss in the home by more than 50%. Walls are the biggest criminals, being responsible for almost 33% of heat wastage in the majority of homes.

Boilers

We rarely think of our boilers - until they fail. Boilers usually break down in winter so it's essential you make sure yours is up to scratch over the summer. If your boiler is over 15 years old, it's probably time you gave it the elbow and replaced it with a nice new energy efficient one. Condensing boilers are the most energy efficient and could save you around a third on your heating bills straight away, and even more if you upgrade to modern controls. If we all switched to a condensing boiler, we'd save £1.3 billion a year!

Controlling your system

There are many myths as to how you should operate your system; run it 24 hours per day, keep it on low all the time, switch it on when you use it etc. In short, use your system in a manner that suits you, both financially and comfortably.

There are a few simple rules to follow.

- Use all your controls, they are there to provide comfort and save you money.
- Set your timer to bring the heating on at a time sufficient to allow the home to be brought up to temperature. This is simple to do.
 1. From cold, turn the heating on and time how long it takes for the home to get warm (it is better to do this on a cold day).
 2. Set the times to coincide with your lifestyle. If you get up at 6.00am, and it takes the house 30 minutes to warm up, set the heating to come on at 5.30am. Don't forget to turn it off 30 minutes before you leave for work as well.
- Use all your thermostats and alter their settings when required.
- Think of your home as a thermos flask. Keep the lid on tight and the heat in and it will stay hot for a long time. Keep opening the lid and the temperature will quickly fall. Your home is no different; the reason we keep the heating on is to replace the heat we have lost through the walls, roof and windows. Keep the heat in once we have warmed it up and it should stay warmer longer.

What Central Heating System?

If you want to heat every room most of the time full central heating is the most economical route. Partial central heating or other forms of heating might suit your needs better depending on your lifestyle. Contact us for further heating advice.

	Savings	Benefit	How it works
Condensing Boilers	Condensing boilers are the most efficient heating boilers you can buy and convert 88% of fuel into heat by capturing the heat normally lost in waste gases.	Replacing a 15 year old boiler with a condensing boiler can save 32% off your fuel bills and be more reliable.	A new condensing boiler will reduce your fuel bills by 32p in the pound compared to one that is 15 years old.
Non - Condensing Boilers	Non-condensing boilers are also known as high-efficiency fan assisted boilers and are the next best thing and cost less to buy.	Replacing a 15-year-old boiler with a high-efficiency fan assisted boiler can save 20% off your fuel bills and be more reliable.	A new fan assisted boiler will reduce your fuel bills by 20p for every pound spent on a 15 year old model.
Combination Boilers	Combi boilers do the work of both a central heating boiler and a hot water cylinder but only produce hot water on demand. You save money because hot water is not stored.	Insulation costs may be lower and fitting usually causes less disruption than a conventional boiler.	Doing the work of both central heating boiler and hot water cylinder a compact, usually wall hung combi often saves space. Best for space saving they can be slow at volume hot water delivery.

Heating Control Systems

Central heating systems have controls so you can regulate the heat given off and for how long. By sensing the temperature they react to supply or save heat and of course save you money. Your controls should be able to give you different levels of temperature in different rooms, and be able to turn heating and hot water on and off at the times you want.

	Savings	Benefit	How it works
Full Heating Controls	Saving £55 a year will pay back the cost in around 3 years.	Provides the biggest energy savings with the quickest payback.	Complete controls systems such as time switch or programmer controls integrate the boiler off to prevent "dry cycling" (where the boiler fires up just to keep itself hot).
Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRVs)	TRVs cost as little as £15 and can save up to £15 per year throughout the house.	TRVs enable you to control the temperature of each room separately so you don't heat rooms that are not being used.	(TRVs) enable you to individually control the temperature of radiators. They also reduce the flow of water as the radiator reaches it's set temperature.
Room Temperature Thermostat	Reduce your fuel bills by £20 to £25 per year.	Automatically controls the boiler so that it only runs when required.	This device automatically switches your heating off once it reaches a certain temperature, and back on again if it drops below your own comfort level.

Example energy savings

All energy fuel bill savings are quoted for a three bedroom semi-detached house.