

# General Advice on Saving Energy

## Households

Here are some general energy saving tips for householders, many of which cost nothing.

### Ten ways to cut your heating bills

- **Keep the heat in**  
Add insulation – especially in your loft and on outside walls. Block up leaks and draughts, especially from windows, doors and the roof. Use heavy curtains, preferably lined ones, to hold back cold air.
- **Shut doors/windows**  
Keep external doors and windows closed to keep the heat in - and the cold out.
- **Turn your heating down**  
Reduce it to a comfortable 20°C. Lowering your thermostat by just 1°C can knock 10% off your heating bill.
- **Programme your heat**  
Get a programmable thermostat or programmable radiator controls so you can vary temperatures throughout the day, keeping the heat down when not needed.
- **Follow the 30-minute rule**  
Set the heating to switch off 30 minutes before bedtime, and set it to turn on 30 minutes before you get up in the morning.
- **Get it serviced**  
Have your boiler or furnace inspected and serviced by a professional every year. The benefits of an annual service include a longer life and the reduced likelihood of breakdown, added safety, and maximum efficiency. An efficient boiler or furnace creates more energy for less, reducing your energy costs.
- **Only heat the rooms you are using**  
Turn off your heating when you're not there or if you're going away for a few days.
- **Have a shower**  
Consider a shower instead of a bath - a shower usually uses about a fifth of the energy of a full bath. You might also consider installing a low-flow shower head to reduce the amount of hot water being used.
- **Get what you've already paid for**  
If you work out at the gym, take a shower after the workout rather than when you get home - after all, you are paying for your gym membership which includes this.
- **Think twice and be sensible**  
There are many other ways to cut down on those heating bills and, in most cases, it just involves thinking twice and using your common sense.  
For example, wear warm, layered clothing indoors during cold weather. Or, if you only need a small amount of hot water to wash the dishes, you could boil the kettle rather than turning on the immersion heater.

## Get eco-smart

Follow these 10 tips to help save the environment while saving you money

- **Change your travel habits**  
Why not cycle to work, organise a car share or, if you really can't live without it, change your car? Switching to a smaller model will not only reduce your CO2 emissions, it could save you money. A big car driver who switches to a small hatchback will typically use 120 fewer gallons (or 540 litres) of fuel each year. With average petrol prices in the region of 90p per litre, that's a saving of over £480 a year.
- **Go unplugged**  
Leaving some appliances plugged in increases energy consumption. And 8% of electricity consumed by appliances is used when they are left on standby, putting an extra 1 million tonnes of CO2 into the atmosphere each year. Turn off your phone charger, stereo, DVD and TV.
- **Switch to energy efficient lightbulbs**  
Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) use five times less electricity to do the same job, producing 60-70% fewer CO2 emissions than normal lighting. They last up to eight to 12 times longer, delivering about seven years of light per bulb. With the average home using 23 light bulbs, the cumulative reducing effect on CO2 and on the household budget is impressive.
- **Cool down**  
Turning down your thermostat by just one degree can reduce your heating bill by 10% and save 240kg of emissions over the year - the equivalent of the CO2 that would be absorbed by eight trees. Solar panels aren't always practical, but you could change to a condensing boiler, which should be at least 89% efficient at converting fuel to heat.
- **Save hot water**  
Wash your clothes at 30°C rather than 60°C and take a shorter shower. This will cut down on your electricity and water heating bills and reduce your carbon footprint in the process. Only boil as many cups of water as you actually intend to use.
- **Don't dump it, recycle it**  
And if you think someone else might find a use for it, then "freecycle" it instead. There are now Freecycle groups set up all over the country, offering everything from free sofas to TV sets see [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org) for more information.
- **Switch off your PC**  
Invest in a less power-hungry laptop and turn it off when not in use. The screen saver only does what it promises - it saves the screen. It still uses almost the same amount of energy as powering the whole machine.
- **Get composting**  
Divert your food waste from landfill where it emits methane. One quarter of the average binful is made up of organic waste. Instead, put it in a wormery or install a food composting bin.
- **Holiday at home this year**  
Even with low-cost airlines and lower prices in some countries, an overseas trip can still add up to significantly more than a home holiday. And if you really must travel by plane, consider opting for a carbon offset plan, which allows you to make a donation to sustainable energy projects. It won't save you money but it could help save the environment.

- **Grow your own salad**

There's no need to buy eco-unfriendly bags of lettuce that have been flown half way across the planet.

You can do this even if you only have a tiny yard or a balcony. Put a stick in the middle of a plant pot to hold up a bit of polythene protection, and you can even have rocket leaves in the middle of winter.