

Cheap and simple energy measures for your home

So much of the power we pay for is power we do not even use. Appliances on standby, lights left on in unused rooms and computers that never get switched off are putting pounds on your bill. Switching off and maintaining your household items will soon make you savings and help you be more energy efficient.

Turn down and switch off

1. Turning your thermostat down by 1°C could cut your heating bills by up to 10 per cent and save you around £40 per year.
2. Is your water too hot? Your cylinder thermostat shouldn't need to be set higher than 60°C/140°F.
3. Always turn off the lights when you leave a room.
4. Don't leave appliances such as TVs and stereos on standby and remember not to leave appliances on charge unnecessarily.
5. Switch off your computer and monitor when they're not being used.

Cooking

1. Only boil as much water as you need (but remember to cover the elements if you're using an electric kettle).
2. Use the kettle to boil water for cooking, instead of heating a pan on the stove. This is more efficient and takes less time too!
3. When cooking choose the right sized pan for the food and the cooker, cut food into smaller pieces and put lids on pans as the food will then cook a lot quicker.
4. If you are defrosting food, or just warming things up, then microwave ovens are ideal as they use much less electricity than conventional ovens.
5. Use a toaster rather than a grill for making toast.

Good housekeeping

1. Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows.
2. Recycle anything you are able to – such as newspapers, bottle and cans – recycling saves energy.
3. Elements in kettles and washing machines that are coated with limescale are inefficient and use more energy. To remove limescale leave a cup full of vinegar in your kettle overnight. Every two months run your washing machine on a 60 degree cycle with no clothes and 200ml of white vinegar.
4. Replace your light bulbs with energy saving recommended ones: just one can reduce your lighting costs by up to £100 over the lifetime of the bulb – and they last up to 12 times longer than ordinary light bulbs.
5. Seal up any draughts in doors and windows using draught excluders. For small draughts use stick-on draft excluding tape, available from most DIY stores.
6. Put aluminium foil behind any radiators fitted to outside walls (with the shiny side facing the radiator). Ordinary kitchen foil will do, or you can buy specially designed panels from DIY stores.

Hot water

1. A dripping hot water tap wastes energy and in one week wastes enough hot water to fill half a bath, so fix leaking taps and make sure they're fully turned off!
2. Have a five minute shower instead of a bath – it saves water and energy.
3. Only use dishwashers and washing machines with full loads, and if you can't, use a half load or economy programme.
4. Always use the low temperature (40°C) programme as modern detergents work just as effectively at this temperature and use much less energy.
5. Wash dishes by hand when you can!

Fridges and freezers

1. Let hot food cool down before putting it in the fridge or freezer.
2. Don't leave the door open for longer than necessary as cold air escapes.
3. Defrost your freezer regularly to keep it running efficiently and cheaply as those filled with frost work harder to stay cold.
4. Keep your fridge and freezer well stocked as they need less energy than empty ones.
5. If your freezer frosts up quickly, check the door seals.
6. Replace an old fridge freezer with a modern 'A' rated one which will use two and a half times less energy.
7. Look out for the energy saving recommended logo.

