



Homes with an elderly resident

❖ Keeping warm in winter

- The recommended temperature for your main living room is around 70°F/21°C and the rest of the house should be heated to at least 64°F/18°C.



- If you feel cold, turn the heat up regardless of what the thermometer reads.

It's so important to keep warm as you are at risk of a heart attack, a stroke or even hypothermia if you're exposed to a cold environment for a long time, or to extreme cold for even a short time.

- Get to know how the timer and thermostat on your heating system work. If it's very cold, set the timer to switch the heating on earlier, rather than turning the thermostat up to warm your house quickly.
- Close the curtains at dusk and fit thermal linings if you can. This will keep the heat in - see Factsheet 2, *Managing Energy in the Home*.
- Put guards on any open fires and be careful not to hang washing too close to the fire.
- Don't block up air vents, as fires and heaters need ventilation. Good ventilation also helps to prevent condensation.
- Get your carbon monoxide alarm checked, or get one fitted if you don't have one, as there is a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning if air vents become blocked.
- Contact your local Age UK for a benefits check and advice on any other financial support you may be eligible for.
- You may be eligible for extra help from your energy company – see Factsheet 8, *The Priority Services Register*. You may also be eligible for the Warm Homes Discount – see:
<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>
- Several thin layers of clothing will keep you warmer than one thick layer, as the layers trap warm air. Clothes made from wool, cotton and fleecy synthetic fibres are a good choice. Start with thermal underwear, warm tights or socks.

- You should always wear gloves and a hat, and wrap a scarf around your face when you go out in cold weather, even for short intervals.
- If you are sitting down, a shawl or blanket will provide a lot of warmth. Try to keep your feet up, as the air is cooler at ground level.
- Wear warm clothes in bed. When very cold, wear thermal underwear, bed socks and even a hat – a lot of heat is lost through your head!
- Use a hot-water bottle or an electric blanket to warm the bed, but never use the two together as this can be dangerous. Check whether your electric blanket can be kept on all night or whether it's only designed to warm the bed before you get in. Get it checked every three years by an expert. Local trading standards departments often offer free testing, or you can ask at the shop where you bought the blanket (they may charge). If you have any continence difficulties, talk to your doctor before using one.
- Don't sit or stand outside for long periods, as you'll quickly get cold.
- Choose boots with non-slip soles and a warm lining, or wear thermal socks. These types of boots keep you safe if the ground is slippery and keep your feet warm.
- Wear slippers that have a good grip and that fasten and stay on properly – make sure they aren't loose or worn out, as this may cause you to trip.
- Keep steps and paths free of ice. Sprinkle them with a mixture of salt and sand if the ground is icy – some councils provide sacks of salt and sand free of charge, if you or someone else can pick them up.
- Consider fitting a grab rail if you have several steps at your front or back door. Ask your local Age UK for more information.
- Check local news and weather forecasts for advice when bad weather is forecast, or visit the Met Office website at:

www.metoffice.gov.uk



❖ **Some useful contacts:**

- The Winter Fuel Payments Helpline, Tel. 0800 731 0160 or:
www.direct.gov.uk/winterfuel
can help claim your Winter Fuel Payments entitlement.
- The Warm Home Discount:
<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>
- Age UK – the information has been largely adapted from this website:
<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

PLEASE REMEMBER – if you are struggling to keep warm or pay your bills this winter, there is help available. Call any of the numbers in this guide or ask a neighbour to do this for you.

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