

Managing Energy in the Home

❖ Saving energy in every room in your house

There are lots of ways to use less energy that are common to every room in the house.

Here are some top tips.

- Only turn on the lights when you need them.
- Make sure all the lights are turned off when you don't need them or you go to bed.
- Use a low wattage energy-saving night-light if you do need to leave a light on at night-time.
- Energy efficient light bulbs save on average around £3 a year each.
- Make sure items that are not in use are unplugged or switched off at the wall.
- Think about what you are putting on extension sockets to make sure you aren't powering something that is not in use.
- Don't leave things on standby - this could save around £35 per year on energy bills.
- Think about "losing" the remote control to the television to reduce the temptation to leave it on standby.
- Don't leave your mobile phone on charge all night – it only needs a couple of hours.
- If you are thinking about buying a new computer, a new laptop typically uses around 85% less energy than a new desktop computer and takes up less room too.
- Get into the habit of keeping doors closed. Keep heat in the rooms you are in and turn radiators off in unused rooms.
- A smart thermostat kit lets you control your heating and hot water from your smart phone using an app such as Hive. The wireless thermostat lets you control your heating via your broadband router wherever you are. If you are away from home you won't have to waste energy heating an empty home; you can turn it off and on using your smart phone.



Apps such as Hive also work with smart speakers such as Alexa and Google Assistant so you can control your heating and hot water with a simple voice command. You could save up to £120 per year.

- Draw curtains at dusk to keep the heat in.
- Consider putting on an extra layer of clothing before turning up the heating.

❖ **Saving energy in the kitchen**

There are lots of ways to use less energy when creating your culinary masterpieces.

Here are some tasty tips to help you stop wasting energy in the kitchen.

- Always use the right sized pan for the job.
- Use the right sized hob ring for each pan.
- Defrost food in the fridge overnight rather than microwaving it.
- Keep the oven door shut as much as possible; make sure the glass door (if you have one) is clean, so you can see what's going on. Every time you open the door you lose heat.
- Keep lids on pans as much as you can to reduce heat loss – turn the heat down when it reaches the boil.
- If you are looking to buy a new cooker, consider an induction hob. Consumer group Which found the best induction hobs are much faster and more efficient than gas or traditional ceramic hobs. Please note that you would need induction compatible pans for the induction hob to work. These need to contain iron and you can test your pans by seeing if a fridge magnet sticks to the base of the pan – if it does, you're good to go on an induction hob.
- Ensure warm foods cool down before placing them in the fridge.
- Cutting food into smaller pieces often speeds up the cooking time.
- Freeze your leftovers, or eat them the next day.
- Use a microwave to reheat food where possible as this is usually a much more efficient method of warming things up.
- Covering food with a microwave-safe lid or pierced cling film will hold moisture and speed up cooking times in the microwave.
- Only boil the water you need in your kettle, and de-scale it from time to time.
- Cooking big batches of food in one go is more energy efficient. Storing spare portions in the freezer gives you a supply of ready meals.



- If you are considering buying a new fridge or freezer, look to buy an A rated model. Currently domestic appliances are rated on a scale of A – G, with additional A+++ ratings for the most efficient. From 2021 this rating is changing to a simple A-G scale, and to allow room for innovation, today's A rated appliances may score at B or C under the new scale. The website of the Topten Initiative (<http://www.toptenuk.org/>) allows you to find the best in class option.
- Make sure air can circulate around the back of your fridge and freezer. Many refrigeration units are built into tight spaces where there is limited circulation. This causes heat to build up and reduced efficiency. Ideally units should be free standing, slightly away from the wall and with no shelf on top or with a vent in the shelf if one is present.
- Make sure your fridge and freezer are set to the right temperature, not too cold and not too warm. This ensures food is kept effectively and ensures energy is not being used to keep the appliance running at too low a temperature.
- Don't keep the fridge or freezer door open for longer than necessary.
- Try not to put the fridge or freezer next to a heat source such as a cooker or radiator, or in direct sunlight.
- Check what you have in the fridge and freezer before you go shopping. Wasted food costs a lot and is also a big contributor towards carbon dioxide emissions.
- If you are buying a new dishwasher, look for the energy efficiency rating (see above).
- If you are considering buying a dishwasher, choose a machine that is correctly sized for your needs - if you have a small household, consider a slimline or compact machine, whereas a large family may be better suited to a full-sized washer.
- Make sure you have a full load before you use the machine - a half load setting usually uses more than half the energy of a full load.
- Use the eco setting wherever possible.
- Always remember to switch appliances off standby when you've finished using them.

❖ **Saving energy in the bedroom**

Snuggle up in your personal haven and keep cosy without paying more than you have to.

- Use the right tog duvet for the weather (low tog in summer and high tog in winter) to avoid having to use the heating unnecessarily.



- Wear socks to bed in cold weather to keep toasty.
- Towel dry your hair thoroughly to cut down the time you'll have to use your hairdryer for.
- Use a hot water bottle to warm the bed up, rather than an electric blanket.
- During winter, set the heating to switch off a short while before you go to bed – that way it'll still be nice and warm as you get ready for bed but the heating won't stay on unnecessarily once you're tucked up.
- Likewise set the heating to switch on just long enough before you wake up for the house to be warm by the time you get out of bed. But you don't need it to stay switched on all the way up to when you leave the house – the house will take a while to cool down again, so try setting the heating to turn off half an hour before you're due to go out.
- Keep extra blankets by the bed so you can easily adjust your temperature during the night.
- Invest in draught excluders for the bedroom door to keep the heat in your room during the night.

Children's Bedrooms

- A TV, DVD player and PS4 will cost around £30 to run over the course of a year – but it could be far higher if they are left on when not in use. Encourage your children to turn off equipment at the socket by making it easy to get to the switch.

❖ Saving energy in your living room

Here are some top tips to keep your living room cosy and keep those energy bills at bay.

- Put your digital recorder on a separate plug socket so you can turn off everything else at the mains but keep your series link recordings.
- If you are going on holiday, switch off your television and set-top box at the plug.
- If you are thinking about buying a new TV, look for the Energy Efficiency rating and check <http://www.toptenuk.org/> for the most efficient option. This is your guarantee that the appliance you buy is among the most energy efficient on the market.
- Remember that the energy consumption of your TV is strongly linked to the screen-size. If you are thinking about buying a new TV think carefully about how big a screen you actually need. Smaller TVs are generally cheaper to run.



- If you are using your television to access digital radio, it's more energy efficient to opt for a blank screen. Better still, get a digital radio instead.
- Get into the habit of turning off the television at the socket or on the set, and not leaving it on standby. You can buy mains controllers which do this by remote control.
- Make sure the brightness setting on your TV is suitable for your room. The brighter the TV is set, the more energy it uses. The factory settings on TVs are often too bright for home use.
- Consider investing in an intelligent mains controller so that all the equipment linked to your TV (video recorder, DVD player, games controllers, etc.) are automatically switched off whenever the TV is turned off.
- If you don't want to purchase a controller, clear a space around your plug sockets to make it easier to turn items off at the mains, or invest in an individually switched extension lead.
- If you are replacing an old TV or other electrical equipment, dispose of it in a way that means it can be recycled, rather than sending it to landfill. Whenever you buy new electrical appliances, the retailer is obliged to either take back the old equipment or tell you where you can take it to recycle it. You can also find out where to recycle electrical equipment locally by ringing the council, or using the 'Bank Locator' search tool on the <https://www.recycle-more.co.uk/> website.

❖ **Saving energy in the hallway**

Don't forget about the hall! Plug those gaps to save even more money on your energy bills.

- Fit draft excluders around the front door and over the letter box and key holes.
- Putting a curtain over the front door helps keeps the draughts out.
- Don't leave the front door open more than necessary.

Adapted from the EST website <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/>

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