



## Energy saving tips

### 1. Review your energy bill for small savings

There are some small ways you can keep your energy payments as low as possible with your energy provider:

- Choose paperless bills and manage your account online (some companies charge extra for paper bills).
- Pay by direct debit. This is usually cheaper than paying when you receive a bill.
- Send regular meter readings to keep your bill accurate. If you have a smart meter, it will do this automatically.
- Question any direct debit increases that seem too high. Your energy company should be able to explain the changes and your usage and payments should balance out over a year.

### 2. Use appliances more efficiently

Using your appliances more efficiently can shave precious pounds off your annual bills.

#### Be energy efficient with your fridge and freezer

- Don't leave the door open longer than necessary. Avoid putting warm food in your freezer as it makes it work harder – allow food to cool down first.
- Defrost frozen food in your fridge. Frozen food will act like an ice pack to help cool the fridge, reducing the amount of electricity the fridge needs to use to keep cool.
- Keep the inside of the fridge between 0 and 5°C and use a fridge thermometer to check your thermostat is accurate. Lower temperatures decrease energy use, but if it's too warm your food will spoil.
- For optimum energy efficiency, aim to keep your fridge and freezer at least three quarters full. You could fill them with bottles of water to take up space. But don't overfill – fridges and freezers work by circulating air around the compartments. If they're too full, air won't be able to circulate, and the appliance will use more energy to keep cold.
- Your fridge and freezer run most efficiently when they're defrosted regularly.
- Use a vacuum cleaner to clean the condenser coils at the back or underneath your fridge or freezer, as thick dust can reduce their efficiency by up to 25%.

## Saving energy on cleaning and washing

- Always fully load your washing machine, tumble dryer, washer-dryer or dishwasher. The fuller the load, the more energy-efficient the cycle.
- Look for, and use, eco cycles on your domestic appliances. Most modern washing machines and dishwashers have them, and they're designed to cut electricity and water use. Dishwasher eco programs cut energy use by around 16%.
- Wash lightly soiled clothes at 30°C, with the occasional higher-temperature wash for more heavily soiled clothing.
- Time your washes carefully. If you're signed up to an energy tariff that offers cheaper off-peak electricity (Economy 7, for example), set your machine's delay-start function to come on during the cheaper period.
- If you're paying the October 2022 price-capped unit rate of 34p per kWh for electricity, the average washing machine would cost you £76.74 to run. The cheapest to run would cost £31 a year, while the most expensive would cost £115.

## Save money and energy on drying clothes

- Don't hang wet clothes on radiators to dry – use a clothes horse instead – or hang them outside if you can. If you need to use a tumble dryer, wring out or spin dry your clothes before putting them in.
- Tumble drying uses a lot of energy, especially if your dryer is inefficient. One load in a C-rated electric tumble dryer costs around 49p, compared with around just 14p per load in an A-rated heat-pump dryer.
- If you're paying the October 2022 price-capped unit rate of 34p per kWh for electricity, an average heat pump tumble dryer would cost around £68 a year to run. Condenser models use much more energy – costing an average £170 a year to run.
- Clean the lint filter every time you use the machine. A blocked filter stops the hot air from circulating freely, so clothes take longer to dry.
- Saving: Instead of tumble drying every couple of days, drying naturally would save you £46 annually, if you have the most energy efficient dryer, or as much as £230 a year if your machine is the most inefficient.

## Save energy with kettles

- Only fill and boil the kettle with as much water as you need. The most energy-saving kettles have a low minimum-fill line and switch off swiftly after boiling.
- Descale your kettle regularly. If it's full of limescale, you use more energy to boil the same amount of water.
- Because gas is cheaper than electricity, it works out slightly cheaper to boil water on a gas hob than using an electric kettle, as long as you are boiling just the quantity you need and switch off the hob as soon as it has boiled.
- And of course, only boil only as much water as you need.

### 3. Replace light bulbs

- It's the age-old tip that most of us have already done. But it's still worth mentioning – energy-saving light bulbs can help you to cut your energy bills easily. Lighting makes up 11% of the average UK home's electricity consumption, so it's well worth considering.
- LEDs are the most energy-efficient light bulbs and use almost 90% less energy than traditional incandescent. CFL bulbs use 70-80% less energy than traditional bulbs.
- Switching a single 100-watt incandescent bulb for an LED one would save £15 per year, according to Energy Saving Trust. Switching a 50-watt halogen bulb for an LED would save £6 per bulb per year. When you add up all the light bulbs in your house, those can be some big savings.
- Remember, energy-saving light bulbs last a lot longer than traditional ones, too, so their lifetime costs are even lower.
- You could consider rechargeable light bulbs which would stay alight for a few hours in a blackout. These are available on Amazon and at Argos.

### 4. Electric heaters

- For those who live alone or work from home, investing in an electric heater could save on heating bills if you just want occasional short, sharp bursts of heat while your central heating is off.
- It's worth noting that in all circumstances, electric heaters are best used sparingly though. Electricity is much pricier than gas per hour. Plus, our tests found that some heaters don't have very good thermostats so don't give you the room temperature you wanted.
- Using radiator valves to only heat the one room you need in your home with central heating is a more cost-effective way of keeping a small space warm

### 5. Smart thermostats

- With a smart thermostat you can operate your heating remotely via the internet using your mobile phone, tablet, or computer. Some can also learn your routine or adjust your settings depending on the weather forecast.
- Coupled with smart thermostatic radiator valves, you can control exactly which rooms are heated, and which aren't.
- You can still do this if your thermostatic radiator valves aren't smart – you'll need to turn them off in each room manually.
- Whether a smart thermostat could save you money will depend on your lifestyle, how efficiently you control your heating already and whether you'd prefer it to using traditional heating controls.

## 6. Use less hot water

- Though you might only use your heating in winter, you use energy year-round to heat your water. So heating and using it wisely will impact your bills. Plus, if you have a water meter, these tips will help you save money there too.
- If you have a hot water tank (rather than a combi boiler), make sure you're using your heating controls to turn your water heating on and off, so you only heat as much water as you need at certain times of day.
- High-volume power showers can use more water in less than five minutes than running a bath so fit an eco-shower head. Your shower will still feel powerful, but it'll cut down on your hot water use.
- Use a shower timer so you know how long you're spending in there. Keeping your shower time to four minutes or under and swapping one bath a week with a four-minute shower can save you £115 per person per year, the Energy Saving Trust estimates.
- You can also use a timer to see how long you're washing up for and try not to have the hot tap running for too long. Make sure you're washing up in the sink or a bowl rather than under a free running tap.
- Insulate your hot water tank and pipes so water stays warmer for longer.

## 7. Find out if you could get energy efficiency grants or free cash

- Energy schemes and grants are available to help pay your energy bills or to support you with the costs of renewable heating. These include:
  - Warm Home Discount – £140 (increasing to £150 in October 2022) mainly to pensioners and those who get certain benefits.
  - Winter Fuel Payment – £100 - £300 per winter for those born before 26 September 1955.
  - For winter 2022, the government's cost of living help package will also be automatically given to recipients of certain benefits, and a £400 energy bill discount will be given to every household in the UK.