General advice
fact sheet 1

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SevernWye
energy agency

A guide to

saving energy in the home



SevernWye energy advice

There are lots of simple ways of saving energy in your home, many of which will cost you nothing at all. This will both reduce your bills and help to protect the environment.

This leaflet contains some of our top tips. For further details, we have a wide range of leaflets available, covering lighting and appliances; reducing heat loss; heating and hot water; and home electricity generation. The full series of fact sheets can be found at: **www.warmandwell.co.uk** or alternatively you can call one of our friendly advisors for advice on FREEPHONE **0800 500 30 76**.



References

*For details of the references used in this document please scan the QR image, visit **www.warmandwell.co.uk/warm-and-well/advice-materials.html** or call us on 0800 500 30 76

Insulation



Insulate your loft.
It is recommended that you have 270mm of loft insulation installed. Check the depth of your insulation and top up if necessary.

Insulate your walls.
Cavity walls that are not currently insulated can have insulation pumped into the cavity. Solid walls can also be insulated, but this is more difficult and more expensive.



Draught-proof your windows and doors.
Heat can escape, and cold air can enter, through gaps around windows and doors as well as through key holes and letterboxes. Draught-proofing can be fitted to prevent this.

Fit secondary glazing film to single glazed windows.
Secondary glazing film can be purchased relatively cheaply from most DIY stores. When applied it creates a gap between the film and the window pane. This won't be as well sealed as a double-glazing unit, but will be much cheaper to fit, and will still save energy.

Use thick curtains.
Thick curtains or those with a thick lining can help to reduce the amount of heat being lost through windows during the evenings.

Heating

Turn down the heating rather than opening windows whilst the heating is on.
Opening windows whilst the heating is on allows valuable energy to escape (however, some ventilation is required in order to avoid the build-up of condensation).

Make sure your heating system is only on when you need it.
It is a myth that leaving your heating on constantly (even at a lower temperature) is more efficient. Remember that it will take some time for the house to heat up and that it will retain the heat for some time after the heating is switched off. Therefore, factor in these warm up and cool down times when setting your timer.

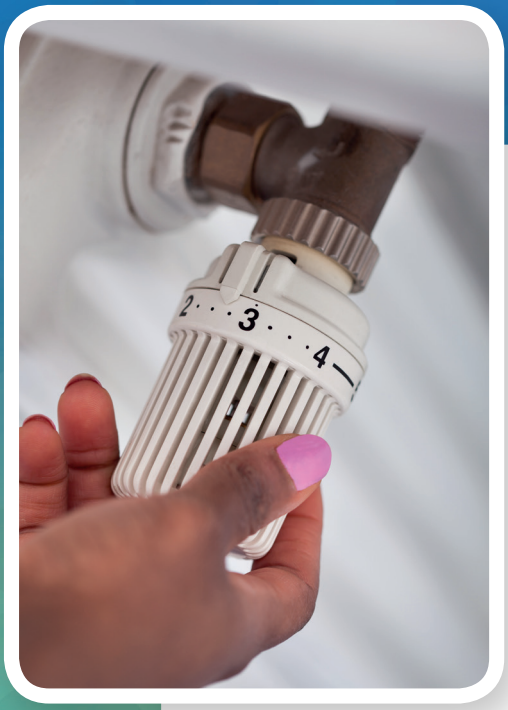


Turn down your heating thermostat.
Even turning down your room thermostat by just one degree can save between £85 and £90 a year*[1].

Put on a jumper rather than turning the heating up.
Don't have rooms warmer than they need to be.

PLEASE NOTE: Reducing temperatures should never be done at the expense of health, particularly where there are elderly inhabitants or young children present.

NHS England recommend that those that have reduced mobility, are 65 or over, or have a health condition such as heart or lung disease, should heat their home to at least 18°C. They recommend a room temperature of 16°C-20°C for babies and young children.



Ensure your boiler is serviced every 12 months.
Boilers operate more efficiently and safely when serviced regularly.

Put reflective foil behind radiators.
This can be purchased at most DIY stores and ensures that more of the heat produced enters the room. It should be fitted behind radiators fixed to external walls.

Move furniture and curtains away from heaters.
Furniture and curtains can reduce the amount of heat entering a room. You can tuck longer curtains behind radiators (but not other heaters as this may pose a fire risk).

Set Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRVs) to a lower setting in rooms which are not used very often.
This may include hallways, landings, bathrooms, utility rooms and spare rooms.

Hot water

Check that your hot water thermostat is set to 60°C.
This is hot enough to kill off bacteria without wasting valuable energy.

If you have a hot water cylinder, only heat water when you need it.
Have the hot water on for just long enough to produce the amount of hot water you need each day.

Insulate your hot water cylinder using a cylinder jacket.
These can be purchased at most DIY stores and can pay for themselves in as little as 6 months*[2].



Fix leaking hot water taps.
You don't want to waste water you have paid to heat up.



Put the plug in or use a bowl when washing dishes.
Avoid running the hot tap more than necessary.

Have a shower instead of a bath.
Most showers use less water than a bath (although this does depend how long you are in the shower and some power showers can also use a lot of water).

Spend less time in the shower.
Spending one minute less in the shower each day will save around £10 off your energy bills each year, per person. With a water meter this could save a further £10 off annual water bills. If everyone in a four person family did this it would lead to a total saving of £80 a year*[3].



Fit a water efficient shower head.
This will reduce your hot water usage while retaining the sensation of a powerful shower. A water efficient shower head could save a four person household around £67 a year on gas for water heating, as well as a further £100 on water bills if they have a water meter*[4].

Cooking

Cook bigger batches of food at the same time.
You could use divided pans or steamers and could also cook several portions at the same time and freeze extra portions.

Choose the right sized pan and cooker ring.
Don't use a small pan on a large ring, as much of the heat will be wasted as it escapes around the sides of the pan. Ideally the bottom of the pan should completely cover the ring.



Always put lids on pans.
This prevents much of the heat from escaping and will also help to reduce condensation. Once boiled, turn down the heat to a gentle simmer.

Avoid opening the oven door repeatedly to check food while it cooks.
This allows heat to escape and requires more energy to complete the job.





Don't use too much water.
Most vegetables need to be only just covered.

Cook small items under the grill rather than in the oven.
A grill uses less energy than the main oven as it heats the food directly.

Don't preheat the oven unless absolutely necessary.
If it can't be avoided, try to pre-heat for no more than 10 minutes.

Use manual utensils wherever possible.
Avoid using electrical utensils that will increase energy consumption.

Use the microwave.
Microwaves are more efficient than conventional ovens.

Use pressure cookers and slow cookers.
Pressure cookers and slow cookers are also more energy efficient than conventional ovens.



Electrical appliances

Don't put hot or warm food straight into the fridge/ freezer.
The fridge or freezer will have to work much harder to cool it down.

Defrost your fridge and freezer regularly.
This will help to keep them running more efficiently. Cleaning the coils at the back (if you can access them) can also help.

Defrost food in the fridge.
Avoid using the microwave or hot water to defrost food where possible.

Load and unload fridges and freezers as quickly as possible.
Avoid leaving the door open to prevent them from heating up.

Check the temperature of your fridge and freezer.
The recommended temperatures are 5ºC for a fridge and -18ºC for a freezer. Much colder and you'll be using more energy than you need to. Any warmer and you will be at risk from bacteria developing. You can buy a special fridge / freezer thermometer to check.



Keep your fridge and freezer well stocked.
Believe it or not, keeping your fridge and freezer full saves energy. It takes more energy to keep an empty space cool.

Don't place your fridge or freezer in direct sunlight or near ovens or radiators.
It will take more energy to cool it down.

When using a kettle only use as much water as you need.
The more water you use, the longer it takes to boil, wasting valuable energy.



Wait until you have a full load before turning on washing machines and dishwashers.
Make the most of having them on.

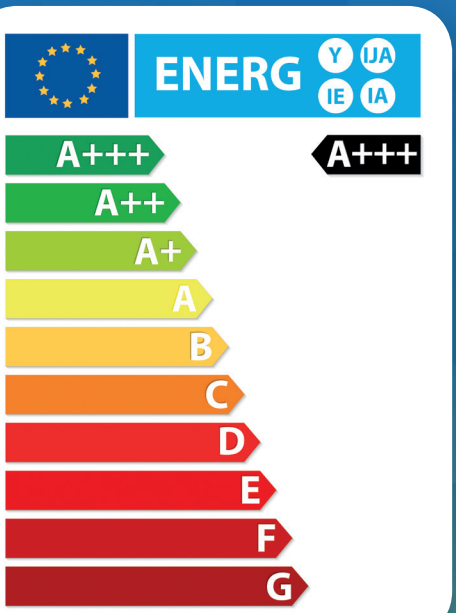
Use economy or eco settings where possible.
Most washing machines and dishwashers have an economy or eco setting which uses less energy and water.

If it's not dirty, wash at 30(°C).
Unless clothes are stained, 30°C should be more than sufficient to get them clean and will use a lot less energy.

Dry washing outside whenever possible.
Tumble driers are one of the largest consumers of energy in the average home. Avoid using them unless absolutely necessary.







Buy the most energy efficient appliances possible.
Most appliances now have an energy rating (A^{+++} to G). Bear in mind that most new appliances are now A rated and you need to look for A^{+} and above to find the most efficient appliances. The rating also takes account of the size of the appliance. This means that an A rated 42"TV will use considerably more energy than an A rated 32"TV. Therefore, if you want to find the most energy efficient appliance, look for the best rating for the smallest appliance that meets your needs.

Say goodbye to standby.
You can save around £30 a year just by turning appliances off at the plug rather than leaving them on standby*[5]. Check the instructions for any appliances you aren't sure about. Some satellite and digital TV recorders may need to be left plugged in so they can keep track of any programmes you want to record.





Unplug chargers as soon as the appliance has charged.
Chargers continue to use energy even when the appliance has fully charged. Turn them off as soon as possible and avoid charging appliances overnight. You can also buy saver sockets that cut the power to chargers as soon as the item is charged.

Choose laptops over desktop PCs.
Laptops typically use 85 per cent less electricity over a year than desktop PCs. Choosing a laptop over a desktop and reducing standby could save up to £17 per year*[6].

Put computers to sleep or hibernate if they're not being used for short periods of time.

This will leave all your programmes etc. left as they are, so you can carry on when you return. You can set computers to automatically hibernate after a set period of inactivity.





Lighting

Turn out the lights in empty rooms.
It is a myth that it uses more energy to turn them off and back on again. Just make sure that areas like stairs are adequately lit.

Use LED light bulbs where possible.
LEDs are very efficient and last considerably longer than even 'energy-saving' lightbulbs (Compact Fluorescent Lamps, CFLs).

Turn off the lights when there is plenty of natural daylight.
Many of us turn the lights on in the morning when it is dark and forget to turn them off again when it brightens up later in the day.



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Severn Wye Energy Agency is a not-for-profit company and charity (charity no. 1083812), established in 1999 under the European Commission SAVE programme to promote sustainable energy and affordable warmth through partnership, awareness-raising, innovation and strategic action.

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Warm &Well

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Warm and Well has been running for over 10 years and has helped thousands of people tackle their energy bills and make their homes more comfortable. Our friendly advisors provide free advice on reducing energy use and on the grants and incentives available.

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This fact sheet is part of a series that includes information on heating and hot water, home power generation, lighting and electrical appliances and reducing heat loss.
The full series of fact sheets can be found at:
www.warmandwell.co.uk

Large print copies are available on request

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