

## Energy Efficiency Guide

### What's in this guide?

- Small changes, big difference
- Energy saving products
- Long term investments
- Independent advice

### Small changes, big difference

Improving the energy efficiency of your home doesn't have to cost the earth. Little changes can make a big difference to reducing your energy consumption. That's good news for your bills and for our planet.

It's important to find a balance between heating, insulation and ventilation. Get this right and your house will be warm dry and airy. If one of these is out of kilter, you could end up with excessive condensation which leads to damp.

#### Keep the warm in

It's a good idea to shut your windows when the heating's on, but don't leave them closed all the time or you risk condensation building up.

#### In the kitchen

To stop heat escaping, use the oven window to check on food rather than opening the door.

Keep your fridge and freezer running efficiently by defrosting them regularly. Fill your freezer! If your freezer is only half full, every time you open it warm air fills all the empty spaces and your freezer has to work harder to cool back down.

If you have a microwave, use it. They use less energy than an oven because they heat quicker.

#### Heating

Setting your thermostat just one degree lower than usual can save a up to £50 a year on your energy bill. It's recommended that you keep it set between 18 – 21 degrees.

Make sure you know how to use the timer on your boiler so that you can set it to come on when you're going to be at home to make use of the heat.

Check that the thermostat on your hot water tank is set to the recommended temperature of 60 degrees.

Remember to make use of your radiator valves. They control the rate that hot water flows through each radiator so you can turn different radiators up, down or off to suit you.

Drying clothes on radiators stops the heat from circulating around the room and can cause excessive moisture inside. Whenever possible, dry your clothes outside instead.

### Turn it off

Switch off your TV, PC and other devices before you go to bed. Switch extension leads off at the plug and turn off lights when you leave the room.

Switch off your phone charger at the plug when it's not in use. It uses energy even if it's not charging your phone.

### Spring clean

Vacuum your radiators. Dust can prevent the heat circulating the room, so your radiators have to work harder.

Ever dusted your lightbulbs? It may sound strange, but dusty bulbs won't be as bright as they could be which means you might end up buying higher wattage bulbs than you need.

Every now and then give the coils on the back of your fridge a good clean. If they're clogged with dust the fridge will have to work harder and use more energy.

Freshen up your filters! Give your dishwasher, washing machine and tumble dryer filters a good clean. They'll work more efficiently and be less likely to break down.

### Bath time

Like long soaks in the bath? Take a shower instead! The Energy Saving Trust estimates that a family of 4 can save up to £20 a year on gas bills by swapping one bath a week for a shower.

Bear in mind that one minute less under the shower will reduce your energy bills too.

### A-grade appliances

When it's time to replace your appliances, make sure you buy A-rated or above. They may be a little more expensive, but usually the cost you save on your energy bills will counteract that extra spend within a couple of years.

## Energy saving products

Here are a few ideas for low-cost quick fix products which can help you save energy – you should find them all for sale in your local hardware store.

Use draught excluders to cover under door gaps to keep the breeze out. Fixing low friction or compression seals to the bottom of your door also help with draught proofing. Insulation tape attached around your windows will also prevent the outside air getting in.

*Remember, your house doesn't need to be 100% draught proof, you need good ventilation too.*

LED light bulbs last longer than incandescent or halogen bulbs and use 90% less energy. Put radiator reflector foil behind your radiators to reflect heat back into the room. Use appliance timers to control when and how long your appliances come on for.

These energy saving products usually carry the same efficiency rating as appliances, so remember to check before you buy.

## Long term investments

As a Social Energy customer, you've already made some big changes to your home by having solar panels, your battery and Social Energy hub installed.

Around 35% of heat escapes through the walls of your house. How to tackle this depends on how your walls are built. If you have cavity walls, cavity wall insulation could help keep the warm in. Some companies provide this for free if you meet certain criteria. If your walls are solid, you could consider internal or external wall insulation. Remember to check what's suitable for your property first.

A quarter of heat is lost through your loft, so laying insulation will make your home warmer and help reduce your bills.

Typically, a tenth of heat is lost through your windows. You have a couple options; the cheapest is to install magnetic secondary glazing. These are magnetic panels that are produced to fit your windows. Alternatively, you could install double or triple glazing, it's not cheap but it will help to save money on your energy bills every year.

Make sure that your hot water tank has a well-fitting lag jacket to save £25-£35 a year, or even more if you heat your water by electricity. Most new hot water tanks come with these as standard, if yours doesn't you can pick one up from a DIY store for around £20.

If you have an older boiler in your house, consider changing it to a new condensing version. They recycle the heat in the waste exhaust gases making it up to 90% more efficient. Make sure you choose the best boiler for your household – typically combi boilers are best suited to smaller houses with fewer residents, while larger households will benefit from a system or conventional boiler.

## More energy saving advice

Independent advice to help you reduce your energy usage and cut your bills can be found

### Citizens Advice

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/make-sure-your-home-is-energy-efficient/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/make-sure-your-home-is-energy-efficient/)

Call: 03454 04 05 06 English or 03454 04 05 05 Welsh

### Smart Energy GB

<https://www.smartenergygb.org/en/smart-living/energy-saving-tips#sid>

### Energy Saving Trust

[www.energysavingtrust.co.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.co.uk)

Email: [energy-advice@est.org.uk](mailto:energy-advice@est.org.uk) Call: 0300 123 1234 England & Wales

**Home Energy Scotland**

[www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland/home-energy-scotland](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland/home-energy-scotland)

Call: 0808 808 2282 Scotland

**Simple Energy Advice**

[www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/](http://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/)

Call: 0800 444202

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