

Energy-saving tips for your home

Energy-saving tips for the kitchen

Your kitchen is probably full of appliances, eating up electricity. Here are our top tips to help you save energy in the kitchen.

Preparing meals

Cooking

- Check what you have in the fridge and freezer before you go shopping. Wasted food is a big contributor towards carbon dioxide emissions.
- Only boil the water you need in your kettle, and de-scale it from time to time.
- Cut food into smaller pieces to speed up the cooking time.
- Use the right sized pan for the job and right sized hob ring for each pan.
- Keep lids on pans as much as you can, to reduce heat loss - turn the heat down when it reaches the boil.
- Keep the oven door shut as much as possible; make sure the glass door is clean so you can see what's going on.
- Cooking big batches of food at once is more energy-efficient. Storing spare portions in the freezer gives you a supply of ready meals.
- Freeze your leftovers if you don't eat them the next day.

Microwave

- Defrost food in the fridge overnight rather than microwaving it.
- Use a microwave to reheat food where possible as this is usually a much more efficient method of warming things up than using the hob or oven.
- Cover food with a microwave-safe lid or pierced cling film to hold moisture and speed up cooking times in the microwave.

Fridge and freezer

- Let warm foods cool down before putting them in the fridge.
- Make sure air can circulate around the back of your fridge and freezer.
- Make sure your fridge and freezer are set to the right temperature, not too cold and not too warm.

- 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.

Dishwasher

- Make sure you have a full load before you use the dishwasher - 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.

Energy-saving tips for the living room

Your living room, sitting room or other living space is a great place to start reducing your energy bills. Here are our top ten tips to keep your living spaces cosy.

- Only turn on the lights when you need them. Consider swapping your ageing light bulbs for energy saving light bulbs; on average, this could save you around £3 a year for each bulb you use. It can really add up!
- Don't leave things on standby. This could save between £50 - £90 per year on electricity bills (note: this applies to the whole house and not just the living room). Get into the habit of turning off the television at the socket or on the set, and not leaving it on standby. (Standby is the mode in which an appliance is neither switched off, nor is in full-on mode. In your living room, this could be used to describe your DVD player which might sit idle displaying the time when you are not using it to play DVDs.)
- Unplug or switch off. Make sure items that are not in use are unplugged or switched off at the wall (when was the last time you used your video recorder?!). If you are going on holiday, switch off your television and set-top box at the plug.
- 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.
- Use separate plugs. 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.
- Buying a new TV? Look for the Energy Saving Trust Recommended logo. This is your guarantee that the appliance you buy is among the most energy efficient on the market.
- Replacing your old TVs or other electrical equipment? Dispose of it in a way that means it can be recycled. When buying new electrical appliances, retailers are obliged to either take back the old equipment or tell you where you can recycle it. Find out where to recycle electrical equipment locally by ringing the council, or find your local recycling centre on the Recycle Now website.
- 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. Find an Energy Saving Trust Recommended digital radio.

- Check your settings. 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.
- When it gets dark, draw the curtains at dusk to keep the heat in. Close internal doors to keep the heat in the rooms you are in and turn radiators off in unused rooms. Consider putting on an extra layer of clothing before turning up the heating.

Energy-saving tips for the dining room

There are lots of easy ways to waste less energy in the room that you eat in...

- Warm the plates in the oven as it cools down after your food has cooked.
- Serve food straight to plates and you won't have to wash up serving plates and spoons.
- Draw the curtains at dusk to keep the heat in and the draughts out.
- Energy saving lightbulbs last longer and save you money over the longer term. Technology has moved on a lot since energy saving lightbulbs were first invented, and so has the way they look. Whatever types of bulbs you use to light your home, there are sure to be stylish energy saving equivalents. They range from stick shaped bulbs and candle shaped varieties, with small or medium screw and bayonet fittings and there are even halogen and dimmable energy saving bulbs on the market.
- Make sure the lights are turned off when you leave the room

When you have guests...

- Don't forget that the room will heat up if you are having guests round so don't go mad with the heating.
- Don't overdo the catering; wasted food makes a significant contribution towards carbon dioxide emissions.

Energy-saving tips for the bedroom

All year round

- Towel dry your hair thoroughly to cut down the time you'll have to use your hairdryer for.
- Make sure all the lights are turned off when you go to bed, or use a low wattage energy saving night light if you do need to leave one on.
- Don't leave your mobile phone on charge all night – it only needs a couple of hours.
- Keep extra blankets by the bed so you can easily adjust your temperature during the night.

In cold weather

- 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.
 - 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 of the door.
 - Use the right tog duvet for the weather (low tog in summer and high tog in winter) to avoid having to use the heating (or air conditioning) unnecessarily.
 - Draw curtains at dusk to keep the heat in for when you go to bed.
 - Wear socks to bed in cold weather to keep toasty.
 - Use a hot water bottle to warm the bed up, rather than an electric blanket.
- Invest in draught excluders for the bedroom door to keep the heat in your room during the night.

Energy-saving tips for the Hall

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

- Replacing a 60W incandescent with a 15W CFL can save up to £9 per year.
- Draw any curtains at dusk to keep the heat in and draughts out.

Doors

Draught-proofing outside doors can save a lot of heat and will only cost you a few pounds. There are four main things to think about:

- the keyhole – buy a purpose-made cover that drops a metal disc over the keyhole
- the letterbox – use a letterbox flap or letterbox brush
- the gap at the bottom – use a brush or hinged flap draught excluder
- gaps around the edges – fit foam, brush or wiper strips like those used for windows.

Putting a curtain over the front door can also help keep the draughts out. And of course, not leaving the front door open more than necessary.

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For more information please visit
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland