

LOW-COST NO-COST ENERGY SAVING MEASURES

There are lots of easy ways to save energy and stay warm at home, at low or even no cost to you!



Keep your heat

About 10% of heat escapes through windows in a typical house, and an additional 15% is lost to draughts. Here's how to keep it in.

No-cost

- Move furniture away from radiators so heat can circulate.
- Shut internal doors to keep heat in each room that you heat.
- Draw curtains at dusk and tuck them behind radiators to keep heat in overnight.
- Open curtains on sunny days to benefit from the sun's warmth.
- Don't leave windows open on cold days.

Low-cost

Hot water

- If you have a hot water tank, keep it warm – an insulating jacket can help and costs around £22.
- Make sure your hot water pipes are insulated.

Insulation

- Use draught-proofing tape to stop leaks from windows, doors, and letterboxes.
- Prevent under-door leaks with a door brush or draught excluder. Draught excluders are not that expensive, but they're also easy to make yourself, with lots of tutorials available online.
- Put temporary window film on draughty or single-glazed windows.
- Use thermal curtains for your windows – or add a thermal lining to existing curtains to trap in heat.

- Install radiator foil behind any radiators that are fitted on external walls.
- Get a thick door curtain to insulate your front door – make sure it hangs right down to the floor.
- Block your chimney. If you aren't using a fireplace, you can buy a 'chimney balloon' or 'chimney sheep' to prevent heat going up the chimney, or make your own. Don't forget to remove it if you ever want to light a fire, though.
- Rugs and carpets can help against cold floors, and you can find nice ones in charity shops.

Larger measures

- Top up your loft insulation. It's recommended for homes to have 270 - 300mm of insulation laid on the floor of the loft, if it is not boarded.
- Get cavity wall, underfloor, internal or external wall insulation as suits your home.
- Upgrade windows to triple, or at least to double, glazed.

Top tip

It's important to never block boiler flues, air bricks, or window trickle vents and avoid over-draught-proofing windows in kitchens and bathrooms where moist air needs to escape. Otherwise, you could end up with damp or mould problems.

Next steps and links at the end of document



Find out more at lowcarbonhub.org/energy-saving-advice



Use energy wisely

We all use energy every day, but there are lots of ways we can make sure we aren't using more than needed.

No-cost

Lighting

- Turn lights off when you leave a room.

Appliances

- Switch appliances off at the plug rather than leave them on standby. The Energy Saving Trust estimates that between 9% - 16% of total electricity consumed in homes is used to power appliances in standby mode.
- Avoid using the tumble dryer when you can. If you do use it, clean the fluff out of the filter.
- If you dry clothes indoors, avoid drying them on radiators. Ideally hang them on a clothes airer in a room to which you can close the door, then open a window to avoid damp and mould.
- You'd be surprised how much energy the vacuum cleaner uses. Empty the dust collector after each use to keep it working at maximum efficiency.
- Avoid running appliances with partial loads. Stack dishwashers efficiently and wash full loads in the washing machine (leaving one hand's width space at the top to allow clothes to circulate).
- Set washing machines to run at 30°C. Most modern fabric detergents are designed to work well at low temperatures.

In the kitchen

- Set your fridge temperature to 3 - 5°C.
- Dusting or hoovering the coils at the back of your fridge and freezer helps it work more efficiently. Pull it away from the wall to ensure better air flow around the back.
- Defrost your freezer to remove any build-up of ice.
- Keep your freezer as full as you can – lots of frozen items help keep each other cold so your freezer doesn't have to work so hard.
- Avoid opening the oven door as much as possible – every time you open it you may lose up to a quarter of the heat.

- Skip pre-heating your oven – you can even place cakes in before it hits full temperature. While preheating is traditionally advised for accurate cooking times, be mindful that you might need to tweak the overall cooking duration.
- Turn the oven off 10 minutes before your food is ready and let the remaining heat finish cooking your food - but do make sure it is fully cooked.
- Use the microwave for smaller food portions that wouldn't fill the entire oven.
- If you share a house with others, try to sync your cooking to use the oven at the same time.
- Defrost food in the fridge – it cools the fridge for free. Just plan for a longer defrosting time.
- Ensure leftovers cool down completely before putting them in your fridge or freezer.
- Only boil as much water as you need in your kettle – use your mug to measure the amount you need for a cup of tea or coffee.
- When cooking, keep lids on saucepans and you'll be able to turn the hob temperature down.
- Match the size of the saucepan you are using to the hob, so you heat the bottom rather than the sides of your pans.
- Cook more than one meal or dish at a time, batch cook and freeze for another day.
- Run dishwashers on an eco setting.

Heating

- Turning down your thermostat by 1°C can save up to 10% on your bills.
- Stay warm at night with a hot water bottle. Reduce or turn off your heating.
- Turn heating off in rooms you don't use and shut the door – but keep rooms warm enough (at least 5°C) to avoid pipes freezing, or damp and mould developing.
- Turn your heating off and bleed your radiators to remove any air locks, then switch the heating back on and check the pressure is correct.



- Learn how your heating works – get to understand the controls and ensure you are only heating your home when you need to. If you want your home warm when you return or when you wake up, find out how long it takes for your heating to warm your home. This will vary with the weather – so regularly tweak your settings.
- Check the flow temperature of your heating system and adjust it to the lowest setting that works for you. Find out more at moneysavingboilerchallenge.com

Hot water

- Take short showers, aiming for a maximum of 4 minutes – set a timer if it helps, and turn off the shower whilst you soap up.
- If you have an electric immersion heater, turn it down to 60°C (but no lower to avoid harmful bacteria-in the tank).
- Only heat hot water when you need it – usually for a couple of hours morning and evening – rather than leaving it on constant.

Low-cost

- Remote controlled standby plugs can help switch appliances off that might otherwise be hard to switch off properly due to inaccessible plugs.
- Fit thermostatic radiator valves on your radiators – smart and manual options are available, with manual ones starting at around £10.
- Buy a washing up bowl so you can use less water when washing up – and avoid leaving the hot tap running while you do so.
- Switch to low energy LED lightbulbs. They use less energy and last longer. You can prioritise updating the bulbs in the lamps you use most frequently.

In the kitchen

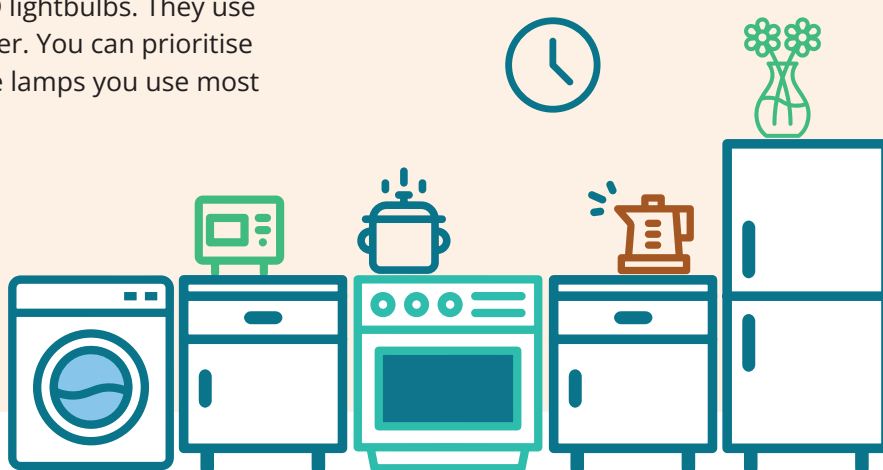
- Descale your kettle, washing machine, and dishwasher regularly to make them run more efficiently and last longer.
- Consider getting a slow cooker – or consider investing in an air fryer, which may use significantly less energy than other cooking methods.
- A microwave can be more efficient than an oven for cooking small items and reheating.

Larger measures

- Install smart heating controls.
- Installing a weather compensator on a gas boiler can improve its energy efficiency by 10 - 15%.
- Consider the energy efficiency of new appliances when replacing washing machines, dishwashers, fridges, and freezers.
- Could you generate your own energy? Find out whether your home would suit a heat pump or solar panels – there may be funding to support their installation.

Top tip

Cold houses can cause health problems and damage to buildings. The World Health Organization recommends a room temperature of 18°C for healthy individuals. If you live with people that have health issues, elderly people, or young children the advice is to heat occupied rooms to at least 20°C.





More financial and practical support

For information about ways to make sure you are not paying more than you need to, details of financial and further practical support, and more, see our **Warmer Winter Checklist** and other information available on our website at lowcarbonhub.org/energy-saving-advice.

Check if you're eligible for funding to cover, or contributions towards, the cost of things like insulation. Contact **Better Housing Better Health** for accurate information on funding available: **0800 107 0044** or see bhbh.org.uk.

Book a free chat with the team at Cosy Homes Oxfordshire to see what larger energy efficiency improvements are possible for your home: cosyhomesoxfordshire.org.

Check out Low Carbon Oxford North's free-to-download in-depth **Housewarming Guides**. These provide a wealth of information for householders seeking to cut energy use and make their home more comfortable in winter and summer: lcon.org.uk/energy/housewarming.



About us

Low Carbon Hub is a social enterprise that's out to prove we can meet our energy needs in a way that's good for people and good for the planet. Because we are run for the benefit of the community, we use all of our profits to fund community-led action on climate change.

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