

Cost-saving on Energy Bills

How to make big savings on your gas and electricity bills, including tips on reducing cost of lighting, cooking, laundry and heating.

Reducing energy usage

As standing charges continue to increase, energy bills are getting higher even before you turn anything on. Here are lots of tips on how to reduce your energy usage without needing to lower your quality of living at home.

Invisible usage

- **Don't leave electrical items on standby**, the red light glowing on TV and washing machine, for example, indicate the items are still being powered by electricity, even though you turned off the programme on TV or washing machine. Make sure power button is switched off when not being used.

- **Switch off at the plug** when not in use, wherever reasonably possible. Make sure no electricity can be used even though you switched off appliance.

Energy-saving lighting tips

- **Don't leave lights on** when you are not using them. Get into the habit of switching off lights when

you are not in the room or not needing a light on.
MYTH: It uses power to flick the switch.

- **Replace halogen lightbulbs with LED** which use only ten percent of electricity by comparison. Instead of waiting to replace bulbs when they blow, start cost-saving now by replacing all your lightbulbs with LED in one go. LED bulbs cost more but last for a great many years, supermarkets sell economy-priced multi-packs. LED bulbs of 7 watts are bright enough, make extra saving by buying lower wattage bulbs for areas of your home that don't need to be brightly lit.

- **Lower wattage.** Hallways and table lamps especially don't need a high wattage, just need some glow. Look at reducing wattage on all lights.

Energy-saving cooking hacks

Ovens are expensive to use. Try these tips to slash cooking cost per meal.

- **Batch cook food** to last two or more days to get better value for money from using oven. Extra portions of many foods can be stored in the freezer for future meals, provided that you are not cooking food that was previously frozen.

- **Keep oven interior clean** as it uses less power to achieve temperature than a dirty oven.



Energy-saving laundry hacks

Use these tips to wash and dry your laundry efficiently while using a lot less energy cost.

Washing hacks

- **Use machine with full load** whenever possible, instead of washing multiple small loads.

- **Set cooler temperatures.** 30 degrees is hot enough unless laundry is very dirty. Cold water cycle is fine for refreshing clothes.

- **Hand wash** small items that just need refreshing.

Drying hacks

Instead of turning on heating in colder months to deal with wet laundry, here are much cheaper options that use less energy to run.

- **Extra spins.** Start by putting laundry through an extra couple of spin cycles after washing machine programme has finished, to spin out more water. Reduces drying time by up to a third, and therefore cuts up to a third of the energy cost if using tumble dryer or dehumidifier.

Cost effective tumble dryer

Tumble dryers are the most expensive household item to use and we are all advised to avoid. But often the most practical solution, especially if you don't have outside space, need work clothes or uniforms dried quickly, or don't have space to line dry sheets and towels. But using some tips and hacks you can cut running cost of tumble dryer by up to 50 percent.



- **Air fryers.** Use half the energy of oven or grill as they cook food in half the time. Experts advise best for small amounts of food as it's cheaper than heating a whole oven. For family-sized dinners air fryer can cost more than using oven. There are pros and cons and many styles, research before buying. Prices from £40 for small size, £110 for large size. Available from retailers such as Argos and Boots.

- **Use grill for less.** An integrated electric grill inside oven that needs to heat can be used before it gets up to temperature. For grilling food such as toast and melted cheese, a small amount of heat can do the job, instead of waiting for it to heat fully.

- **Turn off oven early.** Turn off oven a couple of minutes before cooker timer and food will continue cooking without costing energy because oven stays at correct temperature for a couple of minutes after turned off, if you don't open the door.

- **Microwave.** For example cooking a baked potato takes just 15 minutes.

Tumble dryer balls

Adding balls to wet laundry in tumble dryer separates the items so warm air circulates better to speed up drying. Reduces time in tumble dryer by 25-50 percent depending on load. Costing £1 per ball, use green tennis balls from local discount stores, or packs of dryer balls made of wool from online retailers such as Amazon. Pop in 1-2 balls for single item such as a sweatshirt, 5-6 balls for full sheets or towels load. Avoid plastic dryer balls, they quickly break up and the broken bits can damage machine. TIP: don't use white wool balls with dark clothes as wool fluff transfers!



- **Cost-efficient load:** Avoid running tumble dryer for one item, and don't fill it either. Divide a full load into several smaller loads, this allows air to circulate so less total drying time than one full load that runs for hours and still leaves wet patches.

- **Reduce timer setting.** Reduce running time by 20-25 percent by adjusting timer manually. Or use tumble dryer for just 30 minutes. Laundry will only be slightly damp and you can finish drying for free on clothes airer or on hangers.

Price to run: using most of these time-saving tumble dryer hacks, average 70p per hour depending on load.



Air dry for free

- **Hang up in bathroom.** Use hangers over bathroom shower rail or drying rack over the bath. If you have shower cubicle could buy a tower airer to stand inside. Bathroom extractor fan will dry clothes and remove moisture from the air. Dry outside in sun and wind on drying rack if possible.

Dehumidifier for drying laundry

Cheaper alternative to using tumble dryer or turning on heating to remove moisture from clothes.

Cheaper to run per hour than tumble dryer, but takes a lot longer to dry clothes. Choose capacity suitable for size of home and for the typical volume of laundry drying load. Prices start from £45 for a portable mini dehumidifier suitable for small kitchen or bathroom.

- **Compressor dehumidifiers** are low energy usage, as they take moisture from air without heat output.

- **Desiccant dehumidifiers** cost more to run but give out heat which helps save on room heating. *Price to run: around 3p per hour for small low-energy compressor dehumidifier, around 7p per hour for small desiccant dehumidifier. Double this running cost for a large dehumidifier.*

Laundrette

Can be cost-effective for drying a large load if you don't have a tumble dryer at home. The large commercial dryers allow hot air and wet laundry to circulate well, so dries very quickly.

Keep warm for less in cold weather

- **Turn off unnecessary radiators.** Turn off in rooms that are not used much. Only heat rooms you use the most such as family rooms or living rooms. Turn on heating in bedrooms before going to bed to warm up room. Make sure you have turned off all radiators and central heating thermostat when warm weather begins.

- **Radiator value for money.** Leave space so heat from radiators is not blocked by furniture. Also, avoid putting wet laundry on radiators to dry as this also blocks heat from circulating around the room.



- **Savvy central heating.** Set room thermostat to consistent temperature of 18-20 degrees. Boiler will activate only when room temperatures drops below this. This level of temperature is enough unless you have a vulnerable older person, sick person, or baby in your household.

- **Mini plug heaters.** Cheap to buy and low cost energy. Plug in next to where you are sitting.

- **Blankets.** Great for wrapping up in when sitting, and an extra layer on bed to keep you warm at night. Options available are electric, self-heating, traditional wool or fleece, or wearable with hood.

- **Block draughts.** Front doors and windows have worst cold draughts, also room doors. Products for blocking these draughts include draught tape for around window or doors, warm thermal-lined curtains, draught excluders for draught under door, and letterbox brush. All low cost products. YouTube is good for info about what and how to install.

Stay cool for less in hot weather

- **Block heat.** Avoid using electric fans and air conditioning in hot weather. Instead leave curtains and windows closed during the day to keep heat out, and open windows in the evening to let in cooler night air.

- **Chill out.** If bedrooms are still really hot at night, instead of leaving an electric fan on, try cooling the bed using a chilled hot water bottle. Fill it with cold water instead of hot, and then leave it to chill in the freezer for a few minutes.

- **Fan-tastic.** Save on electricity and cool yourself instead of the whole room, with a small portable fan that can adjust to be hand-held or stand on a table. Such as EasyAcc USB rechargeable mini fan £20 from Amazon, or similar £12 from John Lewis.



Energy saving tips for boiler

- **Turn off pre-heat in warm weather.** Combi-boilers (which provide hot water for taps and for radiators) often have a pre-heat function. This kicks in at intervals day and night to ensure there is always hot water as soon as you turn on hot tap. Mains water is not so cold in warmer weather and will warm up quickly in the boiler without pre-heat function.

- **Reduce boiler temperature.** Boilers have a hot water temperature dial for hot taps, and a second dial for hot water going to central heating if you have a combi-boiler. Set these dials for halfway which is 50 percent of temperature available, this is enough to give you hot water while reducing energy used. This adjustment does not reduce temperature of heating from radiator or water from hot tap. It means instead of boiler keeping hot water ready for use, it will take a little longer to get hot. Lowering temperature can reduce energy bill by 5-10 percent for each dial.

- **Annual boiler service.** Keep it running efficiently so it costs less to function.

Useful links

[Citizens Advice electricity usage calculator](#)

www.moneysavingexpert.com/utilities

energysavingtrust.org.uk

Article by Cost of Living, People Participation Team



Visit <https://www.eft.nhs.uk/service-users-and-carers/cost-living> for more tips and advice on how to save on your household bills.

