

Energy Saving Tips in Your Home

As the number of appliances within our homes increase, so does the importance of saving energy. It is therefore the responsibility of every individual to reduce their usage. Doing so will conserve our limited natural resources for longer, until more efficient renewable sources are discovered. Below are some easy tips for your home.

Around the home

- Identify the power guzzlers in your home and moderate your consumption. As a general rule, larger appliances use more electricity. A laptop uses 60 W of power, while a desktop computer can use 300 W.
- Good habits such as remembering to turn off the lights are the cheapest and easiest way to save power. Timers on appliances are a great cheap trick for forgetful souls. Doing so could save you \$180 per year off your power bill.
- Insulation is a very effective way of reducing energy costs:
 - Have proper ceiling insulation installed by an accredited insulator,
 - Insulate floors using rugs and carpet. Use 'door snakes' or draught stoppers for external doors,
 - Insulate walls with full-length thermal-lined curtains and double-glaze windows,
 - Block up unused chimneys.
- Utilise the sun's free energy:
 - A solar water heating system can supply up to 90% of your hot water needs,
 - Let natural light into your home by opening curtains during the day,
 - Although the initial upfront cost is large, solar energy is a clean and efficient source that can save you money in the long run,
 - Keep any north-facing windows clean to allow the winter sun in. Also, trim trees that may be blocking the sun,
 - Natural gas is a cheap-to-run alternative with lower carbon emissions as well.
- Only turn on the lights you need for the activity. For example, watching television does not require every light in the room to be turned on.
- If you are on a single (peak) rate tariff, try switching to an off-peak, hard wired electric hot water system. You could also look to decrease your thermostat settings – 60-65°C is recommended.



Bathroom

- Wash your clothes with cold water – modern detergents make it just as effective.
- Make sure your dryer's lint filter is clean before every load.
- Dry one load after another because this uses less energy since the dryer is already hot.
- The best option is to sun-dry your clothes – it is better for them as well as the environment
- Dry your hair with a towel first to reduce the hairdryer running time. Hairdryers are very big consumers of energy.



Kitchen

- Fridges and freezers are the biggest energy consumer as they run continuously all year. Tips for fridges and freezers:
 - Are more energy efficient when they are full, rather than empty,
 - Maintain the seals to avoid losing cold air,
 - Avoid placing near your oven, stove or in direct sunlight,
 - Defrost the freezer two or three times a year to keep it running efficiently,
 - Vacuum the coils of your refrigerator every few months in order to lower your energy bill and to keep the condenser working better,
 - Keep thermostats at ideal temperatures:
 - Fridge: between 2°C and 6°C
 - Freezer: between -15°C and -18°C.
- When cooking food:
 - Let your food defrost naturally instead of using the microwave,
 - Use microwaves or electric frypans to save up to 70% electricity,
 - Where possible, use a single hotplate with a saucepan and stacking steamer with well-fitting lid. You can use the water to boil pasta and vegetables at the same time,
 - Use the least amount of required water when steaming,
 - An electrical kettle consumes less energy than boiling water on a stove – only boil as much water as you need in a kettle,
 - Avoid opening the oven door when cooking as it reduces the temperature by up to 20°C each time.

Living areas

- Tips for cooling:
 - Close curtains and shut doors to keep out the heat during the day, and open them at night when it is cooler,
 - Ceiling fans are a much cheaper way to cool than air-conditioning – you can run six fans for the price and electricity of one small air-conditioning,
 - Set the thermostat to a comfortable 24°C.
- Tips for heating:
 - Use the correct size and type of heater for the room. Overheating wastes energy, while undersized heating equipment will struggle on maximum and may cost more,
 - Rug up instead of using a heater,
 - Close your curtains before bedtime, but open them to let in the warming sun during the day,
 - Set the heater to a comfortable 18°C.
- Tips for lighting:
 - Fluorescent lights are a long-lasting and cheap option,
 - The average household replacing 6 times 75 W incandescent globes with 15 W compact fluorescent lamps could save about \$100 per year in electricity costs,
 - LED lights are highly energy efficient and last up to 50 times as long as an incandescent bulb,
 - Paint your walls in light colours and use mirrors to aid reflection of available light.

