

Top energy efficiency tips for heating

1. Set the temperature correctly

- The recommended indoor temperature during cold weather is 21°C (70°F) in main living areas and 18°C (64°F) in other rooms, including bedrooms.
- Turning the central heating down by one degree when the room is at a comfortable temperature will help cut the heating bill.



2. Warm-up and cool-down times

It takes time for a house to warm up and cool down. Keep this in mind when setting the heating controls.

- During winter, set the heating to switch off a short while before going to bed – that way it will still be warm, but the heating will not stay on unnecessarily once the household is in bed.
- Likewise set it to switch on just long enough before waking up for the house to be warm by the time the household gets out of bed. It does not need to stay switched on until everyone leaves the house – the house will take a while to cool down again, so try setting the heating to turn off half an hour before the household leaves the house.



3. Boilers

- Make sure the boiler gets an annual check. This will help ensure it is working efficiently and safely.
- If the boiler is over 10 years old, it is worth considering replacing it with a more efficient model.

4. Radiators

- Most radiators now have temperature valves (TRVs) on them. These can be kept high in your main living spaces such as the living room and bedroom and turned down in any unused rooms, so it is warm enough to prevent damp.
- Make sure radiators are the correct size for the room. Undersized radiators will make the system work harder, cost more money and not heat rooms fully.
- Fit radiator reflector panels behind radiators to help direct heat into the room.
- Try to avoid putting furniture in front of radiators.



5. Supplementary heating

- Try to reduce the use of stand-alone electric heaters; they cost a lot to run. Instead learn to use the heating controls effectively and only use stand-alone electric heaters in an emergency.
- Stand-alone heaters are useful for a top-up but using them for long periods is expensive.



6. Close curtains and doors

- Draw the curtains at dusk to keep the heat in.
- Close internal doors to keep the heat in the rooms which are in use.
- Cut down on draughts through draught-proofing.



7. Avoid bad heating habits

Bad habits cost money.

- Turn the heating off when going out.
- If feeling the cold put an extra layer on before turning the temperature up: 21°C should be comfortable for most especially if appropriately dressed.
- Some people have their heating temperature set too high and then open windows if it gets too warm. Instead, use the thermostat to control the heating.
- Drying clothes directly on radiators stops air circulating and makes the heating work harder costing more money. Use an airer if washing cannot be dried outside.

8. Heating hot water

- Insulate the hot water cylinder if there is one – a well fitted cylinder jacket could save around £45 a year, more if the water is heated electrically.
- Insulating the hot water pipes will save more energy and can help the taps to run hot more quickly.
- Control – make certain there are the right controls and set these correctly to give enough hot water when it is required, and not, when it is not needed.
- Use a sink or basin of water to wash up rather than having the hot tap running.
- Rinse utensils or wash vegetables using cold water if possible.
- A running tap wastes water, so turn off the tap while brushing teeth, shaving, or washing.
- Fix any dripping hot water taps.

