

With energy bills rocketing & the climate in crisis, LCWO's top 5 energy-busting tips can help you save money & cut emissions



Keep your hot water hot. If you have a hot water tank, make sure it is insulated; it is easy and cheap to fit a hot water tank jacket if it isn't.

Don't overheat your home. Keep your thermostat around 18-21 degrees. Turn the heating off overnight and when you're out.

Save on lighting. Replace old light bulbs with LED bulbs and get into turning lights off when you leave the room.

Ditch the dryer. Use a washing line to dry clothes outside when you can. If you have to dry things inside, use a rack, not the radiators; put the rack in a room near an open window with the door to the rest of your space closed.

Stop your home leaking heat. Stick reflective panels or foil behind your radiators to reflect heat back into the room.

Services to support you

Better Housing Better Health: a free one-stop-shop for services, advice and grants. Support line 0800 107 0044 www.bhbh.org.uk

LEAP: free energy and money saving service, with visits for those on a wide range of benefits/low income/health conditions. Benefits include child benefit, meaning any household with a child under 16 is eligible. <https://applyforleap.org.uk>

Other affordable options for all

- **Check you're on the right energy tariff.** If it's not a good time to switch, you can still look into your options. And if you're on an **Economy 7 meter**, use large appliances (washing machines, dishwashers) at night when you'll pay less – but when you're awake, to reduce the risk of fire. See www.cse.org.uk/advice/advice-and-support/economy-7
- **Learn how your heating works.** Use timers and thermostats; turn down the flow temperature on combi boilers. <http://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/thermostats-and-heating-controls/>
- **Insulate hot water pipes** where they are exposed, in unheated spaces like the loft or under the floor.
- **Bleed radiators** to get rid of air in them after the summer – find 'how to' guides online.
- **Avoid standby: turn things off at the plug.** Remote-controlled or cheap timer 'standby plugs' which switch appliances off properly are available online. According to the Centre for Sustainable Energy, 'a typical household could save between £50 and £90 a year just by remembering to turn off appliances left on standby'...
- **Add another layer to single glazed windows.** If you can't afford to replace with double glazing, buy plastic window film to attach on the inside.
- **Check your fridge.** Make sure it is set between 3 and 5 degrees. Defrost freezers regularly.

- **Make the most of natural light.** Allow as much daylight into your home as you can to avoid using electric lights, but...
- **... close curtains at night to keep heat in.** Heavy curtains over doors help in winter.
- **Use washing machines and dishwashers well.** Wash at 30 degrees and avoid small loads: washing machines and dishwashers are most efficient when full.
- **Speed up your morning wash.** Electric showers use energy, so take short showers. Get a water saving shower head online.
- **Reduce draughts.** Draught-excluders stop heat escaping through cracks, but be aware air needs to circulate. Read about options: <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/draught-proofing/>
- **Got a chimney?** Block it with a draft excluder to stop losing heat from inside; different sizes available online and from DIY shops for around £15 – or stick an old cushion/bin bag filled with newspaper up instead. Just remember to take it out before having a fire!
- **Carpet a cold floor or get some rugs.** If you can't insulate your floor, get carpets or rugs to help keep heat in. Pick up cheap/free rugs at Swap Shops and charity shops.
- **Get a warmer duvet for the winter,** so you can stop heating overnight.
- **Consider getting a slow cooker.** Much cheaper to run than an electric oven.

'Bigger' actions for the right moment

- **Insulate loft/roof, walls, floors.** A quarter of household heat is lost through badly insulated lofts & roofs, and a third through uninsulated walls. It costs to insulate, but there are often grants to help, and you'll make the money back in a few years.
- **Double or triple glaze all windows**
- **When your boiler needs replacing,** consider what option would suit you best for heating your home and hot water. Here's a useful summary of some options: <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/heating-your-home/>
- **Replace failing appliances with energy efficient ones.** Look for the most energy efficient model (e.g. 'A+++'); it may cost more upfront, but will save you money over its lifetime.

Renting?

For private renters, check your EPC. If your home is below 'band E', your landlord is obliged to make some changes to make your home more energy efficient. See:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/make-sure-your-home-is-energy-efficient/. In social housing? Contact your council for help.

Useful websites:

Find a 1.5-hour 'How to improve your home to use less energy' workshop video, links to information sheets and more at www.lowcarbonwestoxford.org.uk/energy-use-at-home/

www.bhbh.org.uk

<https://applyforleap.org.uk>

www.cse.org.uk/advice

www.bhbh.org.uk/household-energy-advice/

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy

www.moneysupermarket.com/gas-and-electricity