



Warm Home Hacks

How to reduce heating costs and keep warm at home for less during the winter months.

It's important to make sure that you and your household are warm enough at home to support your health and comfort, as well as avoiding risk of damp issues in your property. Here are strategies and tips to help reduce the amount of heating energy used including tips for cost-saving indoor laundry drying, and how to keep cosy without needing to turn up the heating.

Cost-saving boiler

Adjust boiler temperature

Boilers have a hot water temperature dial for hot water going to taps, and second temperature dial for hot water going to heating system if you have central heating. Adjust both dials so they are set at halfway around the dial, or at 50 percent, as this is enough boiler heat. This adjustment doesn't reduce the temperature of your hot water from the tap or your radiator warmth. But instead of your boiler keeping some hot water ready for instant use, it will take a bit longer to heat up water but will save money. Lowering the temperature on both boiler dials can reduce gas bill by 10-20 percent.

Annual boiler service

A cleaned and serviced boiler provides a more efficient heating system and runs more cost-effectively. Some energy companies have monthly plans from £3.50 per month that include annual boiler service. Or book a boiler engineer for around £85. Check before you book that they specialise in your boiler brand.





Myth-busting central heating

Myth: It's cost effective to leave heating running constantly. Boiler consumes energy all day, whether it is needed or not.

create so much heat, but then rooms quickly cool down.

Myth: Short bursts of high heat are efficient, such as setting heating to come on twice a day at high temperature. Uses a lot of boiler energy to

Cost-efficient solution

- Set room thermostat to a consistent temperature between 18-20 degrees. Boiler activates only when room temperature drops below the setting.
- Focus on heating rooms you use the most.



Cost-effective room thermostat

Set room thermostat at 18-20 degrees to maintain warmth in rooms most used. Usually living room, bedrooms, and whichever room is used if working or studying from home.

Cost-saving radiators

Adjust radiator dial settings

Adjust according to how you use each room. Make sure radiators are turned off in unused rooms and consider turning off in the hallway. You could turn on the radiator or heater in bedrooms to warm up the rooms before going to bed. Family rooms, and bedrooms for vulnerable children and adults should be kept warm. Boiler experts say don't turn radiator dial down to below halfway as it won't produce any effective heat and you will just waste boiler energy.



Create space around radiators

Large pieces of furniture such as sofas and beds, overhanging curtains, and wet laundry over radiators, all block heat from circulating into the room. Even an over-radiator rack will prevent warm air from circulating. Instead, stand your clothes airing rack on the floor in front of radiator so heat can flow effectively to warm the room and dry laundry quickly. Move furniture at least 6-12 inches (15-30cm) away from radiators. This allows heat to flow around the room more effectively so room is warmer and can save up to 10 percent on heating bills. If space is tight in a small room, a few inches between furniture and radiator still helps.

Banish draughts

Even small gaps on a window frame or external door can create nasty cold draughts and reduce room temperature. Here are some easy ways to block those draughts. It is important that you never seal up or block ventilation including extractor fans, air bricks, wall vents, and 'trickle' vents found at the top of modern windows. These are very important for allowing moisture out of your home otherwise mould will develop.

Thermal-lined curtains

These help insulate rooms against heat loss through glass and stop cold draughts from windows. Thermal curtains can reduce room heat loss by up to 15 percent. Prices online from £20.00 for thermal lined curtains, or from £12.00 for thermal linings only. Or hang thick curtain fabric such as velvet. Consider a front door curtain if you have a draught there or glass in your front door.

Draught excluders

Here are some low-cost hacks for blocking cold draughts around your home. Each of these handy items costs from £5.00 each, available from Amazon or local DIY stores. YouTube has lots of helpful videos to show how to attach. No DIY ability needed.

- **Draughts around window frames or external doors:** Attach strips of self-adhesive draught tape made of foam or rubber, sold in rolls. Available in variety of width and thickness, to suit different gaps. Or pack out with bubble wrap strips, the air filled bubbles make great insulation, and works well for gaps too narrow for draught tape.
- **Draughty letterbox:** Install a letterbox brush. Easy to install, comes with instruction.
- **Draughty gap under door:** Attach self-adhesive under-door strip or place a stuffed fabric draught excluder against the gap. A rolled-up towel is a good no-cost temporary alternative.



Cost-saving laundry drying

Instead of turning on your heating for the purpose of drying wet laundry, here are some much cheaper options to consider that use less power to run. Free up your radiator heat to warm your rooms and instead use one of these options to dry off clothes.

Dehumidifier

Cheaper alternative to using tumble dryer or turning on heating to dry clothes. Also, it removes excess moisture from your home, helping to prevent damp and remove the feeling of room being chilly due to moisture in the air. Portable and available in different sizes dependent on the size of area you



want it to be effective in, from one small room to an entire house. Prices start at £45 for a mini dehumidifier, such as by Silentnight, suitable for small kitchen or bathroom. Perfect size for moving from one room to another, drying small laundry loads by standing it next to the laundry rack. If you need to tackle large laundry loads, or a larger space, you will need a bigger capacity dehumidifier. Can set on laundry mode.
Price to run: approximately 7p per hour for a small dehumidifier or 14p per hour for a large dehumidifier.

Electric heated clothes airer

Dries clothes without needing radiator or heater. Can be safely left on overnight, and small amount of heat from airer will take chill off room for the next morning. Drying time 4-5 hours for lightweight fabrics, up to 10 hours for thick jumpers. It is recommended that you also have a small dehumidifier to collect the moisture out of the air that evaporates off the drying laundry to avoid damp and mould in your home. Variety of sizes for heated clothes airer, prices start at £40-£50 for a smaller compact airer more suitable for one-person laundry. These cheapest airers available from online retailers including Amazon, Lakeland and Dunlem.

Price to run: approximately 10p per hour for airer depending on size.

Cost-efficient tumble dryer

Tumble dryers are the most expensive household item to use and we are all advised to avoid. Using a combination of hacks you can cut the running time, and therefore running cost, by up to 50 percent. Tumble dryer will dry laundry indoors much quicker than any other method, and avoids moisture issues in your home from drying clothes indoors.

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

- **Extra spins:** After washing programme finished, set on spin programme once or twice to spin out more water. Reduces drying time by up to a third.

- **Tumble dryer balls:** Adding balls helps separate wet laundry in the machine so warm air circulates better to speed up drying. These balls cost around £1 each, use green tennis balls from local discount stores, or wool dryer balls in packs from online retailers such as Amazon. One or two balls per sweatshirt, or 5-6 balls for sheets or towels load. Reduces time in tumble dryer by 10-25 percent depending on load. TIP: Don't use white wool balls on dark clothes as wool fluff transfers!

- **Reduce timer setting:** Instead of leaving tumble dryer to run until automatic pre-set time ends, try adjusting the timer at start of drying programme to reduce running time by 20-25 percent. Can finish by airing laundry for free on a traditional drying rack if not totally dry.

- **Cost-efficient laundry load:** Avoid running tumble dryer for one item, and don't fill it either. A full washing machine load should be divided into two tumble dryer loads. Will allow wet laundry to dry effectively and quicker than a full load that runs for hours and hours to get soggy areas dry.

Heat the person not the home

It's important for your health and the condition of your home to avoid having an unheated home during the winter. But you can reduce heating costs by supplementing your heating system with other ways of keeping cosy and warm as the weather gets colder, instead of turning up the heating or leaving it on for longer.

Electric blanket

Wrap up in one while watching TV, and pre-heat the bed for a cosy night's sleep. Also sold as heated throws. Prices from £35 for a single bed size, from retailers such as Argos or Dunelm.

Price to run: under 3p per hour.



Mini plug heaters

Low energy way to top up heat just around the area where you are sitting, need to plug in close by as heat output doesn't go far. Great for keeping warm when sitting at computer or watching TV. Can set on a timer, and control the temperature. Easy to take around your home and plug in wherever you need it. Prices from £20 for Russell Hobbs heater from retailers such as Currys and Amazon.

Price to run: around 8p per hour.

Wearable warmer

A hooded fleecy blanket with sleeves is a great way to stay warm indoors. Options include full length. Prices start from £18 for adult size at online retailers such as Dunelm, Temu, or Amazon.

Warm home support

Green Doctors support vulnerable and low income households in London. Offer free energy advice, assessments, draught excluders, home visits. Deliver warm packs containing blanket, gloves, hat, and a thermal mug.

london.greendoctors.org.uk

Better Housing Better Health support vulnerable residents of London and Bedfordshire. Offer energy saving and benefit advice, assessments, home visits to block draughts.

bhbh.org.uk

Useful links

www.moneysavingexpert.com/energy

helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/energy-saving-advice

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home>

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