



How to reduce your energy bills

Simple habits:

- ✓ Turn off lights when you leave a room; change all your bulbs to LEDs.
- ✓ Turn down your thermostat. Even 1°C can save 10% off your heating bill
Wear more clothes indoors. Buy a heated electric throw or poncho for watching TV, or an electric blanket.
- ✓ Get thermostatic controls on your radiators, or better, get smart controls so that you can program the temperature of each room when it will be used (eg Nest, Hive, Tado etc). Why heat a room when you are not there?
- ✓ Use saucepan lids, only fill your kettle for what you need, use the kettle to heat water for washing up rather than running the tap until it gets hot.

Understanding your Energy bills:

Your meter reads the electricity or gas that you've used, in units of kWh. The price of a unit of electricity in many homes has more than doubled, from 18p to 42p. Read your meter regularly and compare it with what you are paying each month. This will help you monitor your energy-saving efforts.

Get your family on board: promise them that half the money you save with these measures will be spent on a family treat!

Service your home:

- ✓ Cut down draughts around your front door, your windows, chimneys and internal doors. Use a joss stick to identify draughts. But you need some controlled ventilation, especially in bathrooms and kitchens, and where you dry clothes and towels. An extractor fan or dehumidifier would be good for this.
- ✓ Put reflective sheets behind radiators and make sure they are not obstructed with curtains or furniture.
- ✓ Line your curtains with thermal lining, and close them at sunset. But don't forget to open them to let sunshine in during the day.
- ✓ Deal with damp patches around the home. Check the damp course, gutters, roof. Install an extractor fan in your bathroom. Call in an expert if you can't track the cause.
- ✓ Check the seals on your fridge, and dust the back of the fridge. Open the door for as short a time as you can. Switch to holiday mode if you go away.
- ✓ Wash clothes at a lower temperature (30°) and hang them to dry outside if you can.
- ✓ Replace your old appliances with new ones rated A+ or A++ .



Vampire Power



Your house uses power even when everything is off. TVs, computers modems, ovens etc may all use energy on standby.



Track down your phantom load with a plug-in meter. Even a 10W continuous load will use 90kWh over the year, around £35, and it all adds up. The meters cost less than £10 from [eBay](#).

Next steps:

- ✓ 35% of your heat escapes through the roof. Adding up to 30 cm of insulation pays for itself within 2-4 years.
- ✓ Double glazing. Full window replacement is ideal but secondary glazing is much cheaper, and easier if you live in a listed house. A much cheaper alternative is a special clingfilm such as [Warmseal](#). It stops draughts and keeps the rooms warm, and less than £10 per window.
- ✓ If you have a cavity wall on the outside of your house it may worth filling, eg with polystyrene beads bonded together with PVA glue. The installer will do a survey to tell you whether your wall is suitable. Make sure your installer is a member of BBA, CIGA or NIA; if properly done CWI can make a big difference.
- ✓ After insulating, consider a heat pump, solar panels, batteries, solar heating etc. You can get ideas for these by visiting some [Open Greener Homes](#) over the year by appointment. These hosts are people who have reduced their energy use and are willing to share their experience with visitors.

Can I get a grant?

Most of the various schemes run by Dorset council are available to low income households in poorly insulated houses. Anyone can get free advice from LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership). They will send an adviser to visit your home and give impartial advice. LEAP is administered by [Ridgewater Energy](#) tel:01202 612726. Or Try C.A.B. for advice.