



HomeEnergyAdviceTeam

Budget Tips for Homes

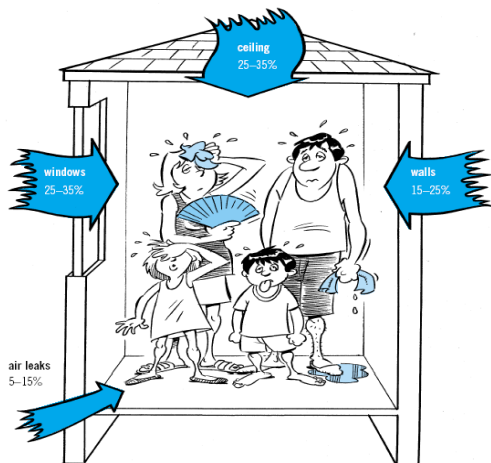
If you are unable to make large changes to your home, either because you are a tenant or simply because you are on a tight budget, here are a few tips on how you can make a significant difference to your energy usage without spending a lot of money.

Keep warm in Winter and cool in Summer while lowering your bills!

In Winter, you want to keep the cold air outside and the warmth inside, whilst in Summer you want to do the opposite. Most of the following tips will help in both seasons:

Keep the draughts out:

- If you live in an old 'leaky' house install weather stripping around windows and doors, use a sand sausage to cover the gap under external doors, and seal cracks between walls, window frames and floors. This can reduce your heating and cooling bills by as much as 10%
- If you have a round extractor fan in your kitchen or bathroom that goes straight up into the ceiling you can buy a *self closing cover* to fit over the fan for around \$30. You can still use the fan but the cover closes by itself when the fan is off. This can be removed if you move house



Windows:

- In Summer, close your windows and curtains during the day and open them up at night when the air outside has cooled down. External shading on east and west

windows is even more effective at keeping your house cooler.

- In Winter let the sun into your home as much as possible during the day on the north, east, and west of your home for free solar heating and close curtains as soon as the sun goes down.

Tenants: Don't forget that you may need permission from your landlord before you make any alterations that require screws etc or may permanently alter your home.

- By installing a clear plastic film that you can tape to window frames, called Winter Windows, you can have a cheap, do-it-yourself, double-glazing equivalent. A kit costs around \$200 and will do all the windows in an average small house, and you will normally save that amount in heating bills in one or two year. Easiest to use with wooden frame windows.

- Curtains with pelmets are more expensive than Winter Windows but will substantially reduce your energy losses as well as giving you privacy and improving the look of your home. Curtains should ideally be made of heavy, lined material and seal well around the edge of the window and touch the floor.

Keep your thermostat down whilst staying warm:

- Every degree you lower your thermostat, you can save up to 10% of your heating cost. It is much cheaper to put on a jumper and keep the heating low than to have a huge heating bill!!
- If you are not using a room, close the door so that you don't waste energy heating unused space.

- Instead of heating your bedroom before you go to bed (and still having to get under cold sheets), try taking a hot water bottle to bed with you, or turn an electric blanket on just long enough to warm the

sheets up. Either option will warm you up more effectively for less money!!

- If you have a timber or tile floor, rugs can keep the floor warmer underfoot.

Insulation:

- As a tenant or on a budget the cost of insulation can seem prohibitive. But if you have access to the roof space in your home you can insulate the ceiling yourself with R3.5 batts and reduce your heat loss by up to 30%. You could save the money you spend on the insulation in as little as two years.

Reduce your hot water consumption.

- AAA showerheads reduce the water you use in your shower by up to 60% and can be bought from \$20. They can generally be installed easily without a plumber, and if you save the original showerhead, you can swap them over again if you move. (Note: a small number of hot water systems cannot use AAA showerheads – check with the retailer before you buy one.)
- Only wash full loads in the dishwasher and washing machine. Use cold water in the washing machine with a suitable detergent.
- Stop the drop: dripping taps waste huge amounts of water and if your hot water tap is the one that is dripping, it will have a big impact on your bill. New washers generally cost \$4-5.
- Where appropriate, reduce the thermostat on your hot water tank and for electric storage hot water systems only, insulate with a “Storage Tank Blanket”.



Lighting.

- Using compact fluorescent light bulbs will save between \$40-\$70 over the life of the bulb even though they are more expensive to buy. If you save the original bulbs when you replace them, you can put them back in and take your fluorescent bulbs with you if you move.

- Turn off lights when you leave the room, even if it's only for 5 minutes.

Cooking.

- Only heat as much water as you need at the time.
- Microwaves are much more energy efficient than stoves/ovens. Especially useful for re-heating meals and cooking vegetables.
- Pressure cookers are a very effective way of reducing cooking time and the amount of energy used.
- Where possible, simmer pots with lids on rather than boiling at full power.

More information

This fact sheet is produced by the Home Energy Advice Team (HEAT) to provide you with some budget tips on how to improve your home. If after reading it you'd like more free information about this or any other topic to do with saving energy in your home, don't hesitate to contact us.

A range of other fact sheets on saving energy and money in your home are available from HEAT



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