

Quick Fixes - easy ways to make your home energy efficient and save money

The experts on Ramsgate Town Council's Climate Change Task Force advise the following

Energy saving measures start with reducing your energy consumption. Here are some easy examples:

Sponge off little stains rather than sling clothes in the wash. We are often advised to turn off electrical appliances at the socket, even when they're on standby. Some older appliances and computer chargers can use a fair amount of power on standby, so it's not a bad rule to follow. Modern chargers use very little power on standby, you'd save more by cutting out one laundry load per month. Jeans and other larger items can go for much longer without a wash than we think they can.

Clothes drying: if you've outdoor space, make use of dry weather outside. The old adage to go by here is "If the pavements are dry, so will your clothes be". It might take a while, and heavy items like jeans might take too long when the air is cold, but sheets and underwear love a good flap in the breeze. If you have to dry clothes inside, try to limit use of tumble driers and avoid hanging clothes and towels over radiators, which makes the rooms damp. Damp air makes you feel colder and is bad for the fabric of your home. Consider buying a dehumidifier: they're small, most modern ones have clothes drying applications and they are much more energy efficient than a tumble drier AND better for your clothes.

Turn your heating thermostat down a degree. For every degree you turn it down, you can save up to 10% on your heating bill. But don't let your house get too cold and damp. Take advice before turning the water temperature down on your boiler, as condensing boilers work best at a specific temperature (usually 60 °C); you can find this in your instruction manual or online. Do not set it lower than 60 °C as you could increase the risk of contracting Legionnaires' disease.

Bleed your radiators. This will help them work at full efficiency. Keys are available at all good DIY stores.

To save money, fit thermostatic radiator valves to help you regulate the different parts of your house; we all like a warm living room, but will sleep better and more healthily in a cooler bedroom.

Close parts of the house, such as spare rooms, when not in use.

Insulate your loft. The single most important thing you can do to reduce your energy bills is insulate your loft. It depends on the material used, but as a general rule it should be fitted to a depth of 270mm. Grants may be available to you. For eligibility for grants to help install loft insulation, google The Eco Experts: A Guide to Government Grants for Insulation 2022.

[A Guide to Government Grants for Insulation 2022 | The Eco Experts.](#)

Get rid of draughts: dealing with draughts is one of the most important and effective things to do when saving heat energy and helping you feel warm in your home.

Windows and Doors - Use draught excluders at the bottom of your doors - even an old pair of tights stuffed with old clothes or sheets will do the job - and hang curtains across external doors to keep out the wind and insulate your living areas from cold surfaces.

Consider adhesive draught excluders, or have brush strips fitted.

On front doors, fit covers to letterboxes and key holes - if it's a hole, it lets that cold air in!

For windows, consider secondary glazing, fitting simple magnetic strip acrylic panels. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEBbSkjkCik>) or try window insulation film (there's some ideas online at <https://www.bestproductsreviews.co.uk/window-thermal-insulation-film?>)

Chimneys and fireplaces - hot air gets lost up your chimney and cold air comes down. To minimise this, use chimney balloons or similar for open fires. DIY options can be as simple as shoving up a ball of scrunched up newspaper. It is important that some ventilation is maintained, so that damp doesn't build up in your chimney, so don't block them completely. And always check that you've removed them before lighting a fire!

Gaps in Floorboards - a surprising amount of cold air can come up between your floorboards and at the edges of your floors under the skirting boards. Sealant or caulk can help, as can mixing PVA glue with sawdust and filling the gaps (this is the professional floor-sanders' trick, because it lasts longer and looks good too). Also, neoprene floorboard/skirting gap fillers are inexpensive and very easy to fit.

More helpful hints can be found here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2022/oct/06/heatproof-your-home-top-tips-for-energy-efficiency>

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