

Use less, save more

Energy

We are all using more and more energy, for example by:

- ♦ charging up our mobile phones;
- ♦ keeping our rooms so warm that we can walk around in short sleeves even in the winter; or
- ♦ drying our clothes in the tumble dryer.

The effects of using so much energy are that our climate is changing, and our energy (gas and electricity) bills are rising.

In the future, we're going to have to be more efficient in the way we use this energy. Most of the energy we use comes from fossil fuels (such as coal, oil and natural gas). These fossil fuels are burnt to produce the energy we all need, but when they are burnt they release huge quantities of carbon dioxide (CO²), and this gas is the main cause of climate change.

We can do something about this situation by taking simple steps to reduce the amount of energy we use and so reduce our energy bills. The less energy we use, the less CO² is released into the atmosphere, which helps to reduce climate change and so benefits us all. Once we are actually aware of what's happening, most of the steps we can take are just common sense.

Heating your house



Take control of your heating. Consider turning down by 1°C the thermostat that controls the temperature in your room or all over your home. You will have

either a single control at a central point in your home, such as in the hall, or you will have thermostats attached to individual heaters or radiators.

If you are elderly or in poor health, you should try to keep your room temperature no lower than 18°C, and your living room and bathroom at about 21°C.

To save energy, turn your radiators down or off in rooms you only use now and again, such as a spare bedroom.

Don't put furniture in front of radiators or heaters as this will prevent most of the heat getting into the room.

Close your curtains at night as they help to keep the heat in the room.

Don't let your curtains cover radiators because they will draw the heat out through the windows. Tuck curtains behind the radiators so that the heat comes into the room.

Hot water

You can use less energy by taking a quick shower rather than a bath. If you use a power shower, remember that in about five minutes it can use as much energy (and water) as a bath.



Don't leave hot-water taps running – use the plug.

You may think that by keeping your immersion heater on all the time, you are using less energy, but that's not true. It's much cheaper and uses less energy if you only heat water when you need it.



Lighting

If there are lights on in a room but there's nobody there, or if the room is bright enough without having lights on, switch the lights off.

Get into the habit – it's simple and effective and it saves electricity.

Avoid 'uplighters'. These are lamps that point the light up towards the ceiling rather than down over the room. They use a lot of electricity because they use high-wattage bulbs of 300w or more, which is the same as over 30 low-energy light bulbs! Use energy-efficient spotlights instead.

Halogen bulbs use less electricity than ordinary light bulbs, but you generally need more of them because each halogen bulb only lights up a small area. This means you may end up using more electricity.

Kitchen

Use the right-sized saucepan for the heating element or gas flame you are using. If your pan is too small, heat will escape up the sides of the pan. If it's too big, it will take longer to heat up.



Put a lid on the pan or dish you are using, if you can. Your meal will cook much more quickly, and you won't be wasting energy.

If you are using a saucepan, turn down the heat when the contents come to the boil. You don't need as much heat to keep a pot boiling as you do to bring the contents to the boil, and they will cook just as quickly.

If you're cooking vegetables in a saucepan, you only need enough water to cover them.

You can use a steamer for vegetables as it allows you to cook two or three different kinds of vegetables at the same time.

If you're cooking a meal in the oven, don't keep opening the oven door as you lose a lot of heat doing this.

Plan ahead by getting ready-made meals and other items out of the freezer in enough time for them to defrost at room temperature.

Don't overfill an electric kettle. Just put in the amount of water you need, but make sure you cover the element. You'll use less energy, which will cost you less, and the water will come to the boil more quickly.

Keep fridges and freezers well away from heat sources such as cookers, dishwashers, washing machines and direct sunlight, so they don't have to use more energy to maintain low temperatures.

Keep the metal grids (condenser coils) at the back of fridges and freezers clean and free from dust, and don't push them up against the wall. This allows the air to circulate around them, which prevents them from overheating and makes them more efficient.



Defrost your fridge and freezer regularly. If the ice inside is more than 5mm thick, your fridge or freezer won't work as efficiently.

Washing clothes and dishes

When you are washing clothes by hand, you don't need to use hot water. Most non-greasy dirt will wash out easily with cold water and detergent. Cold water is also fine for rinsing your clothes afterwards.

Wait until you've got a full load before using your washing machine. Using the 'half-load' programme does not mean that you use half the energy, water or detergent.

Use a lower temperature wash for clothes that aren't very dirty. For most washes, 40°C is just as good as 60°C and uses almost half the energy.



If your machine has a cold-wash option, try using it for clothes that aren't very dirty. Most detergents work extremely well at low temperatures.

If possible, leave your clothes to dry on clothes racks or clothes lines outside rather than using a tumble dryer as they use a lot of energy.

If you have to use a tumble dryer, you should spin-dry or wring out the clothes before you put them in it. Clean out the 'fluff filter' every time you use the dryer as this improves its efficiency and your clothes will dry more quickly.



If you are washing dishes by hand, fill a bowl with warm water and a little washing-up liquid, and wash the 'cleaner' items first. Use cold water for rinsing.

If you use a dishwasher, wait until you've got a full load because the 'half-load' programme does not mean that you use half the energy.

If your dishwasher has an 'economy' or 'eco' programme, you should use it. It will use less electricity and take less time.

Electrical appliances and gadgets

Turn off TVs, radios, stereos, mobile-phone chargers and computers when you are not using them.

But if you do nothing else, turn off the lights when you don't need them!

Water

We all need it, we can't live without it, and we are using more and more of it.

Although we seem to have plenty of rain in the UK, our water supplies are under pressure. We use 70% more water today than we did 40 years ago.

Quite simply, we are using too much water. Our demand for water increases each year and at this rate, no matter what the water companies do, eventually they will not be able to keep up. It also takes huge amounts of energy to treat water and to pump it to our houses, so our demand for water is damaging our planet in more ways than one.

The good news is that there are many simple things we can do at home and at work to reduce the amount of water we use. As well as helping to protect our water supplies both for ourselves and for future generations, we will also benefit in many other ways.

By cutting down the amount of water we use, we can:

- ◆ save money, especially if we are on a water meter;
- ◆ reduce the possibility of water shortages and hosepipe bans in the summer;
- ◆ reduce the amount of 'greenhouse' gases (for example, CO²) that are responsible for climate change;
- ◆ reduce the amount of chemicals and energy used to treat and pump water to our homes and businesses; and
- ◆ reduce damage to wildlife habitats in wetlands and rivers, by maintaining the water levels in these environments.

Here are some water-saving tips for the home and garden – if we each do just one of them, we can help reduce water shortages, water rationing, and our effect on the environment.

The kitchen

On average, we only use about 3% of the water entering our home as 'drinking' water. The rest of the water that enters our home goes down the drain.



Store drinking water in a jug in the fridge, rather than waiting for the tap to run cold.

Never leave a tap running – and if it's leaking, get it fixed

Use water in a bowl to wash vegetables or to wash and rinse plates, rather than running the tap and filling the sink.

Use the leftover water on your garden or house plants, as long as it isn't too soapy.

If you are making a hot drink, fill the kettle with only as much water as you need. You will save electricity as well as water.

Only use a dishwasher if you have a full load. If you just have a few things to wash up, use a bowl.

While you are waiting for your water to run hot, collect the cooler water and use it on your plants.

If you are getting a new dishwasher, choose a water-efficient model.



Laundry

Hand wash one or two items of clothing in a bowl, rather than using the washing machine.

Use your washing machine with a full load if possible, as the half-load programmes are not as energy-efficient or water-efficient.

Older washing machines can use up to 100 litres of water for each cycle. New, water-efficient models use about 45 litres for each cycle.

Don't leave the tap running while you are cleaning your teeth. Use a mug of water instead.

A running tap can use as much as 10 litres of water in the time it takes you to clean your teeth.

If possible, have a shower instead of a bath. If you use a power shower, remember that in five minutes they can use as much water as a bath.

When you are having a wash, use the plug in the handbasin and only run as much water as you need.



The toilet

You don't usually need to flush the toilet every time you use it. Only flush it when you have to.

If you have an older toilet (from before 1991), you can reduce the amount of water it uses by fitting water-saving devices such as a 'Hippo', a 'Hog Bag' or a 'Save-a-flush' in your cistern. Contact your water company to get one. Most water companies supply them free or at a reduced price.

Over a quarter of all the clean, drinkable water you use in your home is used to flush the toilets.

The garden

Use a water butt to collect the rainwater from your roof, rather than wasting clean tap water on your garden. Most water companies either provide them free or at a reduced price.

The average roof collects about 85,000 litres of rain a year, which is enough to fill 450 water butts.

Use a watering can to water your garden. Hosepipes and sprinklers use large amounts of water, and they may be illegal to use if there is a water shortage or hosepipe ban in your area. (Check with your water company for details.)

If you do use a hosepipe, fit a trigger nozzle at the end so you can turn the water on and off easily. Don't leave it running unnecessarily.

Avoid using sprinklers. A garden hose or sprinkler can use almost as much water in an hour as an average family of four uses in one day. (Even if it is legal to use a sprinkler in your area, you still have to register with your water company before you can use it.)



Water your plants early in the morning or during the evening when it is cooler, so that less water is lost through evaporation. Protect your plants against drought by watering them occasionally but thoroughly, which encourages them to form deeper roots.

Build up the organic content of your soil by using compost. Instead of throwing away all your garden waste, vegetable peelings, paper and cardboard, you can turn them into compost and add this to the soil. This will increase the amount of moisture in the soil.

Plant vegetables close together. This will provide shade for the soil and so reduce the amount of moisture lost.

Lay old blankets, carpets or layers of cardboard or newspaper weighted down with stones on top of the soil to reduce moisture loss. This will mean that you don't have to water your garden as often in summer.

Before you cut your grass, adjust your lawnmower so that it doesn't cut the grass too short.

Don't overfeed your lawn because this encourages growth and takes lots of water.

If you have a garden pond, plant a tree or a large shrub beside it to provide shade and reduce evaporation. Floating plants such as water lilies also help to reduce evaporation, and provide shade for fish and other pond life. Cover at least half the pond with these floating plants to provide shade.

Stadium Housing Association
Electric House
296 Willesden Lane
London
NW2 5HW

Tel: 020 8451 7526
Fax: 020 8459 6447
Email: stadium@stadiumha.org.uk
www.stadiumha.org.uk

Printed on sustainable stock.



Part of Network Housing Group
An exempt charity