

Saving Energy at Home



Do you know what the average home's energy bills are made up of? Generally, up to 50% is heating and cooling, around 25% is hot water costs and up to 15% of your energy bill is wasted energy (stand by power). There's lots you can do to reduce your costs. Here are some tips. Remember, the most effective way to save energy is simply not to use it in the first place, but when you do use it, consider the following.

Read your bills

Do you know how much energy you use? Electricity is measured in kilowatt hours (kWh) and the average home in Melbourne uses around 16 kWh per day. Gas is measured in Mega joules (Mj) and the average home in Melbourne uses around 30 Mj in summer and 550 Mj in winter (with gas heating) per day. How do you compare?

Heating & Cooling

By far the best bang for your buck will be ceiling insulation. If you don't already have insulation, give this serious consideration. Studies have shown that you can reduce your heating and cooling costs by up to 80% by simply insulating your ceiling properly. Seal those gaps (draft proofing tip sheet at www.greenmoves.com.au), put your system on a timer and only use it when you are home. Ask yourself every time you go to turn your heater or cooler on "Do I really need this on yet?" Did you know that for every 1 degree less the system has to heat/cool, you could save up to 10% of the running cost? Can you reduce the load on your system?

During winter, let the sun shine in! If you have any windows that get direct sunlight during the day, open the curtains and let it in. You'll be surprised how much it can warm up a room. When the sun is off the windows, close the curtains to help keep the heat in. If you're using the heater, turn the thermostat down and put on a jumper. About 19 degrees is generally adequate. You'll save on costs and still be warm!

In summer, use shading and fans before turning on a cooler. Keep the sun off the windows as much as you can, using blinds, shading or awnings. For every 1 sqm of unshaded glass, 35% more heat is radiated into your home, so shade wherever you can, especially on the North and West sides of the house. Turn the thermostat on the cooler up to around 24 degrees and use it in conjunction with a fan. It has a better cooling effect, is more efficient and cheaper.

Hot water

You can make your hot water more efficient by checking for leaks, insulating the pipe work and storage tank (if there is one) and setting the temperature between 60-65 degrees C. For information on hot water options see our Hot water tip sheet. Available online: www.greenmoves.com.au/freeinfo

Stand by wastage

Do you have many appliances on standby? The most common are entertainment equipment (TV's, stereo, games systems), computing equipment, coffee machines etc. By simply turning them off at the switch you'll stop the power wastage and could save up to 15% of your energy bill. Sometimes that's easier said than done, as often

power switches are behind furniture and difficult to get to. The good news is that there's a good range of energy saving gadgets available on the market that make it very easy. Check them out and decide which is the most suitable for your situation. Examples are remote power saving switches, foot power off switches and energy saver power boards.

Do you leave your phone charger plugged in and on? If you do, you're wasting energy. These draw power, whether a phone is connected or not, so remember to switch it off at the wall when not in use.

Check your fridge and freezer

Fridges and freezers are always on. The difference between an efficient fridge and an inefficient one shows in the running costs. An efficient fridge should use just 1 kWh of energy a day, costing around \$76 per year to run on today's pricing. An inefficient fridge can use up to 6 kWh a day to run and cost over \$560 per year.

Check your fridge seals are sealing properly by sticking a bit of paper between the fridge and the door, then close the door. If the paper slips down or is very easy to pull out then the seals are not effective and should be replaced. This can be a DIY job. Check the temperatures too – a fridge should be around 4 degrees C, freezer -18.

Got an old beer fridge in the garage? There's a good chance it's costing you a lot of money to keep that can of beer or bottle of wine cold every day! If you're not using it, consider turning it off until the next time you really need it.

Lighting

You'll be surprised at what can be saved by just changing the lights and turning them off when they are not required. When your light globes need replacing, do it with energy saving globes. There's a wide variety on the market so make sure it's fit for purpose. Our lighting tip sheet has further information and is available online at www.greenmoves.com.au/freeinfo

Good habits

You can save energy easily by simply changing a few habits. Turn off lights when you're not in the room, only run the washing machine and dishwasher when full, use timers on things like coffee machines, and minimise the use of things that heat. Things that heat generally cost the most to run (approximately 45c per hour).



For any queries or additional information on this tip sheet please contact Green Moves Australia on (03) 9024 5515 or 1300 898 742

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