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## **How to save energy in your home on a shoestring**

You don't have to make big investments to make big savings on your energy bills. You can save a surprising amount with some actions that cost little or no money. The following article tells you how

Many people are trying to cut down the amount of energy they use in the home these days. High energy prices have eaten into household budgets, and many people also want to do their bit to help prevent Climate Change. Everyone seems to be getting in on the act, with politicians installing solar panels and wind turbines on their houses.

However, you don't have to invest in such expensive and sophisticated technology to make big savings on energy in the home. In fact you can save a large amount of money with some simple measures that are free, or else cost very little to do, with a very high return on your initial outlay.

You can start reducing your home energy consumption and your bills today with 10 simple actions:

1. Swap the 5 to 10 light bulbs that you use most with low energy bulbs. Low energy bulbs now cost only about 50p each, and can save up to £10 a year in electricity bills. Over its lifetime, a low energy bulb will save you £50-100 in electricity costs. It's one of the best investments you can make. Plus always turn out lights when you leave the room
2. Don't leave appliances like televisions and computers on standby and remember not to leave appliances like mobile phones on charge unnecessarily. Things left on standby are still using electricity, and could be using 10-20% of your electricity per year.
3. Turning your thermostat down by 1°C could cut your heating bills by up to 10 per cent (or an average of £30). N.B. the recommended temperature for a living room is 21 °C. And make sure you have set your thermostat to only heat your house when necessary, during the day when you are there. If your current heating controls don't allow you to program this, consider replacing them
4. Fit a hot water jacket to your hot water cylinder that's at least 75mm (3") thick, and you could save around £20 a year. And it should cost only around £10 to do.



5. Make sure you are not overheating your hot water. Your cylinder thermostat should be set no higher than 60°C/140°F
6. Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows, making sure that they do not cover your radiator.
7. A dripping hot water tap wastes energy, so make sure they're fully turned off and any leaking taps are quickly repaired
8. Use thick rugs with underlay on wooden floors to improve their insulation
9. Wash your clothes at no more than 40 degrees. All modern detergents are designed to clean successfully at 40°C and there is no need for a pre-wash. Washing at 65°C requires twice as much energy
10. Only fill your kettle with as much water as you need (but remember to cover the elements if you're using an electric kettle)

You can also have other valuable energy saving home improvements done for free if you receive certain government benefits. These include loft and cavity wall insulation, and new central heating. Your energy supplier or one of the major national insulation companies should be able to tell you if you qualify for one of these.

So there you have it – you really can save a lot without having to invest a lot.

**About [Downwithco2.co.uk](http://Downwithco2.co.uk)**

DownwithCO2.co.uk makes it easy for people to make big cuts in their gas or electricity usage. By signing up for five basic actions on the site, people can initiate actions that will reduce their home's carbon dioxide emissions by over 3 tonnes a year with little or no impact on their daily lives. This is equivalent to taking a car off the road for each home. Even taking one or two of these steps has a big impact.

In under 30 minutes, householders can set in motion the following five changes:

1. Install home insulation
2. Upgrade to a super-efficient condensing boiler
3. Replace light bulbs with low energy bulbs
4. Buy an energy efficient fridge, dishwasher or washing machine when the current one needs replacing
5. Install a solar hot water system

The site also features information and contacts for more advanced measures to reduce carbon emissions, such as solar electricity and ground source heat pumps.