

HEATBASE Ltd FACTSHEET 47

Energy Saving Tips

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There are several things you can do to save fuel that won't cost you anything; some may seem obvious or even stupid, but these are the things that are often overlooked and that can make a big difference.

The most common idea that nearly everyone has heard is to "turn down the thermostat by 1 degree which could save you 10% in fuel consumption". This is true, but it means a 1 degree drop over the entire house, not just one room. It also means turn down your room thermostat and/or your thermostatic radiator valves, not the boiler thermostat! Most people can't see the point of this as they think it means they will be too cold. The science behind this theory is that the human body only recognises when temperatures are too high or low when they are about 1 ½ degrees C higher or lower than the comfort zone. Therefore, if your perfect room temperature was 20 degrees, you wouldn't feel that it was too warm until it hit 21 ½ degrees or that it was too cold until it got to 18 ½ degrees. For optimum results try turning the thermostats down a fraction each day until you feel cold; then turn up a fraction to find your minimum comfortable temperature.

Once the sun goes down make sure you close your curtains; even in the rooms you don't use! These rooms are often forgotten. Closing your curtains not only helps prevent unwanted drafts, but also provides an insulated shield against heat loss through your windows. If you heat these unused rooms you will help to keep the heat in them, and if you don't it will help prevent some of the cold permeating into the room through the glass. Make sure when you close the curtains they are behind any radiators; otherwise the heat becomes trapped behind them which keeps the room cooler, the heat loss through the glass higher, and makes your boiler use more fuel!

Rooms that aren't used should have their Thermostatic radiator valves kept to a low setting. All you need is sufficient heat to keep the room aired and free of damp; 10- 12 Degrees C is the usual setting for this, but may be higher depending on the construction of the property. Also keep the doors closed to these rooms as you are trying to keep room temperatures steady.

Keep all your internal doors closed, as this is the only way to regulate rooms to the correct temperature. There's no point trying to heat your sitting room to 21 degrees and the kitchen to 18 degrees if you leave the doors open! You would end up with a warmer kitchen than you wanted a cooler sitting room and a boiler working harder than it needed to. If you can't keep your sitting room door closed for your pets or for some other reason, try half closing it instead of leaving it fully open, within about 15 minutes you will feel the temperature start to rise.

Always keep something on your feet and wear a top with long sleeves, (even if it's thin) or wear a "onesie". Cold arms and feet make you feel colder, this should prevent you turning up the heat to feel warmer.

If you have drafts under your doors, use a draft excluder; they may not be fashionable but with the money you've saved in fuel, you might be able to buy a designer one for next winter.

Keep your thermostat at a lower temperature in the mornings and afternoons than you would at night. Lower temperatures feel more comfortable during daylight hours than after dusk.

Turn your heating off at least 30 minutes before you go to bed, as the rooms will take time to start to cool you will usually be cosy in bed or fast asleep before you even notice any drop in temperature.

Although it is essential to save energy you should not allow it to affect your health. The following are figures which relate to comfort and health at certain temperatures for prolonged periods:

Living room temperatures

18-21C - comfortable temperature

9-12 or 24+C: Risk of stroke and heart attack

21-24C or 16-18C - some discomfort

12-16C - risk of respiratory disease

Less than 9C - risk of hypothermia

Source: Study by housing expert Richard Moore