

Household energy action guide

Ready to cut your energy costs?

This guide offers some simple but cost effective actions to help reduce your energy bill and improve the comfort of your home. Some actions will have no cost and require minimal effort, but result in big dollar savings. These are the obvious ones to start with and will give the biggest bang for your buck.

Step 1 Commit to the actions you can do around your home by placing a tick in the right-hand column.

Step 2 Share these actions with members of your household and support each other to stop spending more than you should on energy.

Heating

Action	Cost	Effort	Savings	✓
Draught seal external doors and windows, wall vents, skirting boards, and external cracks and gaps to keep the heat in. [Note: care is necessary when draught sealing if you have unflued or open flued gas heating (refer to https://www.esv.vic.gov.au/community-safety/energy-safety-guides/home-safety/heating-your-home-gas)].	\$	●●	★★	
If you have a reverse-cycle air conditioner ('split system'), use it for heating in the cooler months. Make sure you clean the filter regularly to keep it running efficiently.	–	●	★	
Keep the thermostat below 20°C. Every degree higher will increase running costs by around 10%.	–	●	★★	
Close off rooms not in use so you only heat the rooms you are using.	–	●	★★	
Turn the heater off overnight or when you go out.	–	●	★★★	
Have a professional check your ceiling insulation and top up if necessary to ensure you have the right R value. › Older houses can have low insulation levels and the existing insulation may have become less effective over time.	\$\$	●●	★★	
Install window coverings to protect windows from heat loss through glass. For example: closely woven, close fitting curtains or blinds with pelmets.	\$\$	●●	★★★★	
Install chimney balloons or dampers on open fireplaces, and self-closing dampers on exhaust fans.	\$	●●	★★	

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Cooling

Action	Cost	Effort	Savings	✓
In summer, use external shading or close your curtains to block direct sunlight and keep the heat out.	–	●	★	
If you have a fan, use it before turning the air conditioner on.	–	●	★★	
Set your air conditioner thermostat to 24–26°C. Every degree lower will increase running costs by around 10%.	–	●	★★	
Unless you have evaporative cooling, keep windows and doors closed when your air conditioner is running.	–	●	★★	
Avoid running your air conditioner all night unless you need to for medical reasons. A fan can generally keep you comfortable during the night at a much lower running cost.	–	●	★★	
Open the doors and windows to ventilate your house when the outside temperature drops on summer evenings.	–	●	★★	
Add external shading to keep the sun off your windows and to improve your homes summer comfort: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › North windows can be shaded by horizontal structures that stop the high summer sun from hitting the glass but allow the lower angled winter sun in. › East and west windows need protection from the low summer sun which can heat the house, so vertical shading is best for them(for example: bamboo blind or canvas awnings). 	\$\$	●●	★★	

Hot water

Action	Cost	Effort	Savings	✓
Install a low flow shower head to save water AND energy.	\$	●	★★	
Take shorter showers; use a shower timer to make sure showers are four minutes or less.	–	●	★★	
The average hot water system has a lifespan of 12–13 years, so if yours is more than 10 years old, start to do the research and plan for its replacement. Think about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › the fuel source available to you › how much hot water your household uses › the running costs of a new system › the purchase cost of a new system. 	–	●	–	
Get a plumber to fix any dripping taps, especially hot water taps.	\$	●	★★	
Insulate hot water pipes leading from your hot water system into the house.	\$	●	★	
Invest in an efficient electric hot water system, either heat pump or solar.	\$\$\$	●	★★★	

Cooking

Action	Cost	Effort	Savings	✓
Keep lids on pots and pans when cooking and use the right sized pot for the job.	–	●	★	
Consider replacing your gas stove with an electric induction cooktop to improve indoor air quality and protect against future gas price rises.	\$\$\$	●●	★	

Whitegoods – fridges, washing machines, clothes dryers and dishwashers

Action	Cost	Effort	Savings	✓
If you have solar panels, run your appliances during the day when the sun is shining.	–	●	★★	
If you have a second fridge, turn it off when it's not needed.	–	●	★★★	
Check your fridge and freezer seals, clean and replace damaged seals.	\$	●	★★	
Check that the heat exchange coils at the back of the fridge are clean and well ventilated.	–	●	★	
Wash clothes with cold water where possible.	–	●	★★	
Avoid using the dryer. Instead use the sun and wind by hanging clothing outside or under a carport or pergola.	–	●	★★	
If you have a dishwasher, only run it when it's full.	–	●	★	
Consider replacing an older fridge (greater than 15 years old) with a new high efficiency model — and choose the right size for your needs.	\$\$\$	●	★★★	
If you do lots of clothes drying, consider replacing your existing dryer with a heat pump dryer.	\$\$\$	●	★★★	

Lighting

Action	Cost	Effort	Savings	✓
Switch lights off that aren't being used.	–	●	★	
Use natural lighting wherever possible.	–	●	★	
Replace incandescent lamps or halogen downlights with LEDs.	\$	●	★★	
Replace fluorescent tubes or compact fluorescents with LEDs.	\$	●	★	

TV, home entertainment

Action	Cost	Effort	Savings	✓
Turn your TV and entertainment appliances off at the wall when they're not being used. They are still drawing power in standby mode (you will often see a small light). Standby power from all appliances can account for as much as 10% of your energy bill.	–	●	★★	
Before buying, check the energy star rating of a new TV and choose an efficient option.	\$	●	★★	

Tip

If you are going to buy a new appliance use the energy rating labels to upgrade to a high efficiency appliance. You will spend less on running costs over the life of the purchase.