

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	✓
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.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > If your insulation needs replacing > Top up your ceiling insulation. Old ceiling insulation can compress over time and lose its effectiveness. 	<p>\$\$\$</p> <p>\$\$</p>	<p>•</p> <p>••</p>	<p>★★★★</p> <p>★★</p>	
Check that it's properly installed and that you have the right R value. <i>In Victoria R3.5 is a minimum for ceilings, but up to R5.0 is best.</i>				
Install window coverings to protect windows from heat loss through glass. For example: closely woven, close fitting curtains or blinds.	\$\$	••	★★★★	

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Cooling

Action	Cost	Effort	Savings	✓
In summer, close your curtains during the day to 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%.	–	●	★★	
Keep windows and doors closed when your air conditioner is operating to avoid wasting energy.	–	●	★★	
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.	–	●	★★	
Use 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) 	\$\$	●●	★★	

Whitegoods – fridges, washing machines, clothes dryers and dishwashers

Action	Cost	Effort	Savings	✓
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.	–	●	★	
Try not to open the fridge door too often.	–	●	★	
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.	\$\$\$	●	★★★★	

Hot water

Action	Cost	Effort	Savings	✓
Take shorter showers; use a shower timer to make sure everyone has a four minute shower.	-	●	★★	
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. 	-	●	-	
Install a low flow shower head and save water AND energy.	\$	●	★★	
Fix any dripping taps especially hot water taps.	\$	●●	★★	
Insulate hot water pipes leading from your hot water system into the house.	\$	●	★	
Invest in a solar hot water system.	\$\$	●●	★	

Lighting

Action	Cost	Effort	Savings	✓
Switch lights off that aren't being used, including fluorescent lighting.	-	●	★	
Use natural lighting wherever possible.	-	●	★	
Count the number and wattage of your downlights. Replace inefficient lamps with more efficient lighting:				
> Replace 12 volt halogen lamps with lower wattage halogens	\$	●	★	
> Replace 12 volt halogen lamps with 12 volt LEDs if compatible	\$\$	●	★★★★	
> Replace 12 volt halogen downlight fittings with a 240 volt CFL or LED downlight fitting.	\$\$\$	●●	★★★★	

TV, home entertainment, IT and other small appliances

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, if you see this, turn it off at the wall. Standby power can account for as much as 10% of your energy bill.	-	●●	★★	
If you have a radio, use it rather than the TV for background noise.	-	●	★	
Install a 'standby-killer' switch or a standby power controller (SPC) to disconnect power to appliances when they're not being used.	\$	●	★★	

Cooking¹

Action	Cost	Effort	Savings	✓
Only heat the amount of water you need, if you are making a cup of tea.	–	●	★	
Keep lids on pots and pans when cooking and use the right sized pot for the job.	–	●	★	
Cook in bulk and freeze the excess.	–	●●	★	
Use small appliances where you can, for example: use the toaster instead of the griller.	–	●	★	
Check that your oven door seals are in good condition and don't open the oven door unnecessarily during cooking.	–	●	★	
If you have a microwave, use it for cooking where possible, but switch the clock off. More energy is used to power the clock than cook food.	–	●	★	

¹ While each action will have a small impact, adopting more efficient cooking practices will contribute to overall savings.

Other appliances

Action	Cost	Effort	Savings	✓
Reduce your pool filter running time to the safe minimum set out in the manual. <i>Pool pumps and filters can be very expensive to run.</i>	–	●	★★	

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.