

home truths

Thames Water and home services provider npower have joined forces to show how introducing some simple changes at home could help you save money on household energy bills without giving up any of your creature comforts



More than 50 per cent of the energy used in a typical home is for heating. By lowering your room temperature by just 1°C you can reduce heating bills by as much as 10 per cent without your family even noticing the difference. Using the heating one hour less every day can also save you between £20 and £30 a year.

Installing a thermostat or time-switch set to function only when you really need the heating on can help reduce annual fuel costs by about 20 per cent. Fitting individual rooms with thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs) will also save on bills as radiators in the kitchen or spare rooms can be adjusted according to need. Thames Water supplies TRVs – for more information please call 08456 020820.

Extra padding

Loft and wall insulation could decrease your heating bills by around a fifth and npower offers both cavity wall and loft insulation that could save you up to £100 per year.

On a smaller scale, draught-proofing for doors and windows is both cheap and easy to install. Double-glazing or DIY secondary glazing is also worth considering. A draught strip around windows and external doors (available from most DIY shops) will save around £10-£20 a year.

For more information on npower insulation services call 0800 269695.



Bath-time savings

Use a thermostat on your hot water cylinder to reduce the temperature of your stored hot water to 60°C, which, mixed with cold water, is adequate for bathing and washing.

Replacing a 15-year-old boiler could save you 20 per cent on your fuel bills or 32 per cent if installing a condensing boiler.

You could also make savings by fitting lagging, which should be at least 3½ inches thick, to your hot water tank. Thames Water offers a range of Worcester Bosch condensing combi boilers that give off low levels of harmful 'greenhouse gases'.

For more information on boilers call Thames Water Homecare Services on 08456 020820.



Lighten up

Another great way to reduce your electricity bill is to fit low-energy light bulbs. These last twelve times longer and use 75 per cent less electricity than regular bulbs. Six low-energy light bulbs could cut your energy bills by £362 over the bulbs' lifetime.

Applied knowledge

When choosing new appliances try and choose models that are the most energy-efficient. Look for ovens with features such as a half-grill and dual control rings and washing machines with an economy wash and half-load option. The most energy-efficient dishwashers should have an 'A' rating; generally modern appliances are more efficient than their older counterparts.

However, to achieve maximum efficiency ensure you turn off appliances when not in use. Some, especially TVs, continue to use energy even while on standby.

For a more detailed summary of how much electricity is used by each appliance in your home, or for more tips on energy efficiency, see npower's handy Home Energy Guide on www.npower.co.uk or call the npower Energy Efficiency Helpline on 0800 022220.