



Energy Saving Tips – Q&A

1 Should I leave the heating on low all day, or turn the thermostat up and down?

You'll save energy, and therefore money, by only having the heating on when it's required. Using a timer is best, because your thermostat is designed to turn your heating system on and off to keep your home at the temperature you set it.

Central heating controls

Getting a grip on your central heating controls will help heat your house more effectively and cut your fuel bills. If your central heating system has a timer or programmer (and almost all do) you can use it to control when your heating and hot water comes on and when it goes off.

This is handy because it means you can programme your central heating to fit around the way your home is used. If you're not at home or are in bed asleep, then the heating doesn't need to be on. The trick is to set your heating to come on half an hour before you get home or get up, and set it to switch off half an hour before you no longer need it. This is because an average home takes around 30mins to heat up when the heating comes on and 30mins to cool down when it goes off.

So, say you get up at 07.30, leave for University at 08.30 and get home at 18.00. It would make sense to set the heating to turn on at 07:00, off at 08.00 and on again at 17.30. In the evenings you should set the heating to turn off half an hour before you go to bed. Your programmer may also have the option of setting different on/off times at the weekend, or more than two cycles during the day.

2 What do the different settings on my central heating controls mean?

AUTO

The heating will go on and off during the day at the times it has been programmed to do so.

24 HRS

The heating stays on all the time.

ON

OFF

The heating will remain off all the time.

ALL DAY

The heating will switch on at the first 'on' setting you have programmed and then remain on until the last 'off' setting of the day.

ADVANCE

Moves the programmer to the next 'on' or 'off' setting in the daily cycle.

BOOST

Switches the heating on for a one hour 'boost' of heat.

+ 1 HR

3 What is a room thermostat?

A room thermostat is usually found in a hallway or sitting room. Its job is to monitor the temperature in the house and send a signal to the boiler telling it to switch off when the house is warm enough. Thermostats are normally set at between 18 and 21°C. This is a comfortable temperature for most people, and warm enough to minimise the risk of flu and other winter illness.

4 What are thermostatic radiator valves?

Thermostatic Radiator Valves or TRVs allow you to control the temperature of a room by regulating the flow of water through the radiator. If, for example, during the day you spend most of the time downstairs you could set the TRVs on the downstairs radiators to medium or high, whilst leaving the upstairs radiators low, or even turning them off altogether.

5 What are hot water cylinder thermostats?

Cylinder thermostats regulate the temperature of your domestic hot water by switching off the heat supply from your boiler once the set temperature has been reached. They can save you money, and avoid wasting energy by over-heating your water.

6 Do not regulate the heating solely by opening the windows

7 If my heating is on, should I keep doors open or closed for each room?

It's better to keep doors closed for the area you want heated. Radiators, electric panel heaters and convection heaters all work by creating a convection current in a room. As hot air rises, it circles around to the other side of the room, cools and sinks and travels back along the floor to the heater to be reheated again. Closing doors makes sure this current remains within the designated space.

8 Should I set thermostats on individual radiators, rather than using the main thermostat to control all of them?

It's best to have as many controls as possible, so you can fully control the way you want your home to be heated.

9 Should I turn individual radiators down at the valve or will it only make a difference if controlled via the main thermostat?

There's little difference. By turning your radiators down or off using thermostatic radiator valves on the side of them, or by reducing your room temperature via a thermostat, you decrease the amount of heat your heating system has to generate. Your room thermostat only switches your heating off when the set temperature has been achieved, so turning your thermostatic radiator valves down will mean your radiators will not get as hot and will gently heat your home to the set temperature. If you have them on high, your radiators will emit a lot of heat until the set temperature is met.

10 Do phone or laptop chargers still use electricity when they're plugged in, but not connected to the device?

Try to unplug chargers when not in use. A lot of devices draw power when plugged in and not in use. This is sometimes known as vampire power. Using this standby power can be easily avoided by switching devices off at the wall.

11 Should I leave lights and appliances on, or turn them on and off each time?

Turn them off when you don't need them. Also avoid leaving TVs and other devices on standby.