



## Small changes with a big impact – Energy saving tips

The looming energy crisis is a cause for concern for us all and, as well as saving money on our ever-rising monthly energy bills, by following these simple steps we can all play our part in helping to conserve energy resources for those in need over the coming winter months. You might think it's stating the obvious, but they do say that assumption is the mother of all \*\*\*\* ups!

**Set your boiler's flow temperature between 55 and 60 degrees**— experts estimate this one step could save you up to £70 – want to know how? Your boiler's flow setting controls the temperature water is when it leaves your boiler. Its default setting is usually too high – mine was until I checked it after researching this piece. Simply turn it down a small amount: your home will feel just as warm, but you could cut your energy bills by 8% which could equate to up to 70 per year – easy saving no 1.

(If you have a combi boiler, set the flow temperature to 50c for heating and 55c for hot water and if you have a boiler and a hot water cylinder, try setting the flow temperature on your boiler to a few degrees over 60c for heating and hot water, and setting your hot water cylinder to 60c (you'll usually find the control for your cylinder a third of the way up the tank).

Hot water should be stored at a high enough temperature to stop bacteria like legionella from multiplying so always check before lowering too much.

**Time your shower time** – by reducing your shower time to four minutes or less you could save an average household up to £70 a year. Better still, follow Jeremy's lead and switch the shower to cold – it takes a while to build up, but once acclimatised, you'll barely notice the difference other than the positive mental and physical health benefits of cold-water therapy!

**An obvious one – but don't tumble dry** – I'm not a fan of damp clothing draped around the living room, but there are some handy indoor drying racks that attach to the ceiling or wall which take up less room – see [example here](#) and [here](#). Ditching the dryer alone could save you £60 per year.

**Put a jacket on....your boiler!** – simple yet effective, by putting a jacket on your boiler you reduce heat loss keeping water hotter for longer, saving up to £35 per year in the process. A British Standard Jacket should be 80mm thick. While you're at it, try insulating exposed hot water pipes with foam tubes too – it stops them from freezing and cracking.

**"Turn it off!"** – how many times a day do those of you with teenagers find yourself saying this when every light in the house is on? It's an easy fix and a good habit to fall into especially when you realise that lighting accounts for around 11% of a typical power bill. Switching them off can save up to £20 per year. Switching old bulbs to LED will also mean using up to 80% less electricity.

**Draft proof your house** – obvious thought it may seem, plugging any small drafts can trap in warmth saving you up to £45 a year. Professional draft proofing can be expensive and, in many instances, homemade fixes can be just as effective. Indeed, many of you may still have the old corduroy snake draft excluder granny made back in the day. If you know anyone crafty, ask them to knock you one up using old fabric scraps and [this pattern](#).

**Dial it down** – setting your thermostat to somewhere between 18-21°C is ideal, and turning down the temperature by just 1 degree could save up to £128 on your energy bill. Try to get out of the habit of boosting as it burns a lot of excess energy...

**Get cosy for winter** – pulling the curtains before it gets fully dark will account for up to 15% reduction in heat loss.

Follow all of the above quick and easy steps and you could be looking at a saving of around £488 – every little really does help...

For more energy saving tips and advice read the following articles:

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/money/16367433/turn-down-bills-hot-hacks/>

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/>



## Rising cost of living and your wellbeing

The rising cost of living in the United Kingdom is beginning to affect the mental health and wellbeing of people across the country and rising expenses and financial constraints or difficulties can negatively affect your mental health and wellbeing.

If the cost of living is affecting you, here are some budgeting ideas that may help. Start by looking at your monthly income – this might include maintenance loans, bursaries, wages, personal savings, or family funding. Look at what you are spending: essential expenses will typically include things like mortgages, rent, groceries, transport, utility bills for electricity, gas and water. Don't forget other bills such as mobile phone costs, and non-essential expenses like subscriptions, going out, clothes shopping and holidays.

If you are spending more than you have coming in, you will need to make some changes. You could look at cutting back on non-essential expenses, such as buying gifts. It's also worth rethinking a few of your essential expenses, for example, you could make some changes to your weekly shop by buying own-branded goods or changing to a cheaper supermarket.

With the up and coming half term school holiday, rather than spend money for attractions or activities, here's a list of free activities you could consider:

- Build something out of trash/recyclables
- Collect leaves and then try to identify them by researching them online or at the local library.

- Go to the park, ride a bike or go for a walk.
- Listen to your favourite songs together and sing along.
- Bake brownies or cupcakes together for family or friends.
- Create memory boxes for your child's favourite pictures, artwork, and mementos.
- Make a slide show of your favourite digital photographs.

Remember: being active, creative, and kind to others can help to maintain our positive mental health and increase our overall wellbeing.

## SAD (SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER) BY ELAINE

As autumn is fast approaching and evenings are getting darker earlier, a change of season can sometimes affect our moods. There are some foods that can help to prevent seasonal affective disorder (SAD); this is partly because we are losing levels of vitamin D which is produced by sunlight. We tend to eat more comfort food during the autumn/winter time but this can have a detrimental effect on the way we feel and how they affect our energy levels.

The best foods to eat are:

**Salmon** – rich in Omega 3 which is great for brain health and includes high levels of vitamin D.

**Berries** – naturally sweet and have amazing health benefits for the brain and include high levels of vitamin C; this can help overcome the urge to dip into the biscuit tin!

**Green tea** – contains high levels of compounds which can reduce inflammation and increase levels of the feel-good hormone dopamine.

**Dark chocolate** – chocolate contains high amounts of antioxidants – the higher the cocoa amount, the less sugar it contains. Chocolate is known to improve mood, and dark chocolate is the best option as it contains more iron, magnesium and zinc.

**Beef and chicken** – contain high amounts of vitamin B12 which increases energy levels.

**Bananas, cheese, yoghurt, and fortified cereals** – if you are a vegetarian, try and include more of these foods in your diet as they are also high in vitamin B12.

**To avoid:** Unfortunately, the tastiest foods we enjoy when we are feeling a bit down are the worst for us as they're high in calories and sugar, for example cakes and fizzy drinks. Processed meat such as bacon, ham and salami are high in salt and nitrates which can affect your hormone imbalance.

**Tip:** Remember it's best and more cost effective to buy frozen fruit rather than fresh, especially blueberries and raspberries, as they can be expensive, and they also retain their vitamins longer when frozen.

### Pomegranates – the superfood!

Pomegranates have long been known in the middle east to help with ailments; the seeds and juice of a pomegranate are known to protect the heart, can inhibit growth of cancer cells and recent health studies have shown this fruit can half the build-up of harmful proteins in the brain linked to Alzheimer's.

### Did you know?

Raspberries contain compounds that reverse oxidative stress. These include the cause of early grey hair, brain fog, wrinkles and tiredness!

### Mood boosting dessert

Pineapples are naturally very sweet, have high amounts of antioxidants and anti-inflammatory benefits. Try slicing a few rings of pineapple, grilling them until slightly browned and sprinkle with cinnamon powder and some honey. Mix some Greek yoghurt with the zest of lime for a healthy to add vitamin C.

