



**Stay
warm**

**Spend
less**

Simple things you can do to keep
in the heat and save up to \$500
on your power bill this year.

consumer.

EECA
ENERGY EFFICIENCY &
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
TE TARI TIAKI PŪNGAO

Small changes big savings

Worried about high power bills this winter? You're not alone. The good news is small, easy changes can make your home warmer and healthier for you and your whānau.

By tweaking how you use power, you could also save up to **\$500** on your power bill across the year.

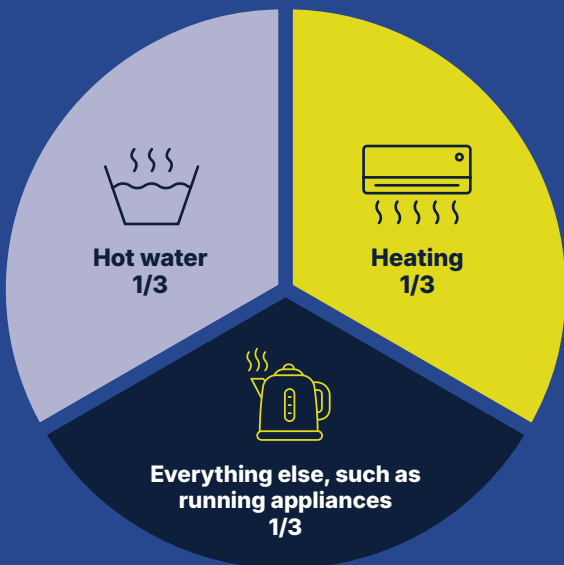
Many of the tips in this guide are free, and making just one or two changes in the places where you use the most power can still help.

You'll also find advice for checking you are on the best and cheapest power plan, and what to do if you are struggling to pay your power bill.

For more info visit eeca.govt.nz/winter

Where does your power go?

Focusing on the things that use the most energy can help you save the most money.



Tips for the whole home



Keep the air dry and moisture away

Damp air makes it harder to heat your home, which can increase your power bill. It can also allow unhealthy mould to grow.

Where does the moisture come from?

You might be surprised how much moisture you're creating in your home as you go about your day.



Clothes drying

5L per load



Cooking

3L per day



Clothes washing

0.5L per day



Washing dishes

1L per day



Showers and baths

1.5L per day
(per person)



Breathing

0.2L per hour
(per person)

Simple things you can do

- Open the windows for 10-15 minutes each morning to bring in dry, fresh air.
- If you have secure window latches, leave the windows slightly open during the day when you're not using any heating.
- Whenever possible, dry your clothes outside.
- Use extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms.
- Use lids on pots to avoid steam escaping.



Only heat the rooms you are using

Heating makes up around a third of your annual energy use – so there is a big opportunity to make some savings.

Only heating the rooms you're using and closing doors to others can save up to **\$320** each year.

Stop heat escaping



Seal up draughts

Draughts let heat out of your home. Sealing gaps and tightening screws around windows, doors and cat flaps could save up to **\$100** per year.



Curtains and window coverings

Curtains and blinds prevent heat from escaping through windows. Floor-length, heavily lined curtains that are wider than the window frame do the best job.

If you don't have window coverings, or if your curtains have seen better days, check if you have a local curtain bank to see if you qualify for free ones.



Window film kits

You can buy inexpensive DIY window insulator kits from your local hardware store. These offer a more affordable option than double glazing, and still make a big difference.



Lighting

An incandescent 100W light bulb will cost you about **26¢** to run each night. This can add up, so turn off lights when you leave a room.

Switching to LEDs when you replace lightbulbs will save on energy costs and you won't need to replace them as often. Across your home, that could save you around **\$100** a year.



Turn off unused appliances

Most of the things you have plugged in use power all the time, even when they're on standby. Switching unneeded appliances – like a second fridge or heated towel rail – off at the wall when not in use can save you **\$200** or more on your power bill over a year.

Tips

- You can buy special window-sealing tape from hardware stores to block gaps.
- Use draught stoppers and snakes to prevent heat escaping under doors. You can make your own by rolling up a towel.
- Open curtains every morning to make the most of the sun's heat and close them at sundown to keep in that heat. This can save you around **\$90** each year.
- Put a rolled-up towel along the gap between the curtain rail and the wall to create a seal at the top.
- Consider a smart plug. They automatically turn devices off when they aren't in use.
- Remove excess moisture from the air with a dehumidifier, or if you have a heat pump it may have dry mode.

In the kitchen



Get a slow cooker

- Cooking a large meal in the oven costs about **\$1.30** each time. Using a slow cooker will only cost about **26¢** a meal.



Use pot lids

- Cover your pots and use extractor fans while cooking to stop the steam escaping.



Dishwasher tips

- Wait until your dishwasher is fully loaded before you run it.
- Choose the eco or auto-sensing cycle so it doesn't use more power or water than it needs.

Hot water tips

- **Don't turn your hot water cylinder down or off to save money.** It's important to keep your hot water at a safe temperature, turning it down or off can pose health risks. Hot water should be stored at a minimum of 60°C to stop *Legionella* bacteria from growing in your hot-water cylinder.
- **Insulate your cylinder to make it more energy efficient.** You can buy cylinder wraps from hardware stores for about \$150 and pipe insulation from \$5 per metre (ask for 'thermal pipe lagging').

In the bathroom

- **Test your shower's water flow:** if it fills a 10L bucket in less than 1 minute, it's wasting water and money. Efficient showerheads can be expensive, but you can buy water-flow restrictors (cheap little discs) that reduce water flow.
- **Consider a shower dome:** a professionally installed shower dome catches the steam from your shower and sends it down the drain.
- **Stop the drips:** a dripping hot-water tap can waste about 28 litres of water a day. This can add about **\$175** a year to your power bill! If you are renting, tell your landlord.

In the laundry

- **Wash your clothes in cold water:** a cold wash often performs just as well for everyday clothes and only costs around 6¢ per wash compared with a warm wash, which will set you back about 30¢. This can save you about **\$30** per year.
- **Drying clothes outside is free:** compared to running a vented clothes dryer, which can cost about \$1 per load.
- **Clean your dryer lint filters:** this will improve the airflow so your dryer doesn't need to work as hard.
- **Give your washing extra spin time:** if you know you need to hang washing inside, spin the load on the fastest speed or give it an extra spin at the end of the wash. Every drop spun out means less dampness in your home.

Time for a new washing machine or dryer?

Check the energy rating label. More stars means it's more efficient and will cost less to use over its life.

Check your power plan

By simply changing your power plan or company, your household can make significant savings.

How to find a cheaper plan

Go to a power plan comparison website and enter a few quick details. It's useful to have a copy of a recent power bill too.

Compare your results

Your available plans will be displayed from the cheapest to most expensive. There are some things you'll need to consider to make sure the plan you choose is suitable for your home.

Some plans require that you:

- have a smart meter
- commit to the plan for 12 to 24 months
- pay for your power in advance
- only pay online.

Already on the cheapest plan? That's awesome! Power prices change all the time though, so it pays to check a comparison website at least once a year to make sure you're not paying too much.

Switching is easy

Once you click on the "switch" button, the company you want to switch to will contact you by phone or email. They will also manage the process, including telling your old company.

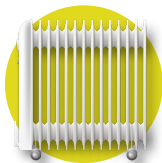
Consider power plans with free or cheap power periods

Some power plans (often called flexi, eco-saver or off-peak) offer free or discounted power at specific times, like during weekends or after 9pm.

If you're on one of these plans, make sure you shift your energy use to those times (appliances like dishwashers and washing machines can often be used when electricity is cheapest). Otherwise, you risk paying more.

Use the right heater in the right room

Most plug-in electric heaters cost about the same to run – around 60-80¢ an hour. However, some are better suited to certain rooms.



Bedrooms

Oil column heaters are your best choice here. They are quiet, deliver a gentle heat and work well in smaller spaces.



Living areas

For larger spaces, a heat pump is the most efficient choice. If you don't have one, a tower heater with a fan works well to spread the heat quickly. Panel heaters are another option – they are quiet, slim and easy to tuck out of the way.



Just to keep yourself warm

If your home is hard to heat, you can focus on keeping yourself warm rather than the whole room. A small personal fan or radiant bar heater pointing at you can warm you up quickly.



Choosing the right size heater

Most heaters are 2000W or 2400W. These are big enough for a small, closed-off living area or large bedroom. Smaller heaters (1000W or less) will just take the chill off rather than keep the room warm, so are best for a small bedroom.

Get the most out of your heat pump

Set the temperature

Don't crank the temperature up to warm up quickly. Set your heat pump timer to come on before you wake up or come home instead. Have the temperature set between 19 and 21 degrees (a little warmer if you have older people or young babies at home). This can save you around **\$40** a year.

Clean your heat pump filter

Heat pumps have removeable filters that get clogged with dust. This restricts the air flow and makes the heat pump work harder, which uses more power.

It's a quick fix – just take out the filters and give them a gentle vacuum. Clean them every few months, or more often if they're really dirty, to save up to **\$50** a year on running costs.

Heating tips

- **Use a fan** – warm air rises to the ceiling when you heat a room. If you have a spare fan, run it on a low setting beside the heater to help spread the heat evenly. Your heater won't have to work as hard and it will save you money.
- **Electric blankets can be cheap to run** – about \$10 over a winter. Check your electric blanket for damage, especially the power cord and controller.
- **Don't leave your heat pump running all the time** – it's more efficient to turn your heat pump off overnight and when you leave home.
- **Don't use unflued gas heaters** – these heaters fill the air with dangerous gases and make the air damp. An electric heater is a better option.



What to do if you're struggling to pay your bills

If you're worried about paying your power bill, ask for help early. You don't have to face a cold winter.

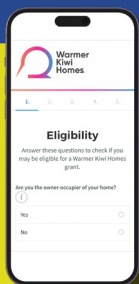
Contact your power company. They need to help you manage your power costs and offer you a payment support plan.

They must try to contact you at least five times before they disconnect your power and avoid disconnecting you at times when it's harder to get reconnected. You shouldn't get disconnected early in the morning, late at night or just before a weekend or public holiday.

Do you rely on power for medical reasons?

Your electricity can't be disconnected if you or someone in your home is registered as a 'medically dependent consumer' and you need a supply of electricity in your home to stop serious harm to health. Let your power company know so they can help you register.

Visit yourpower.co.nz for more information.



The Warmer Kiwi Homes programme

Every family deserves a warm, dry home. The Warmer Kiwi Homes programme covers 50-90% of the costs to purchase and install approved insulation and up to 90% of

the cost of an approved heater. This can lower your power bill while keeping your home warm and healthy.

You may be eligible if you own your own home, it was built before 2008 and you have a Community Services Card or live in a low- or middle-income area.

Check if you're eligible. Call **0800 749 782** or visit warmerkiwihomes.govt.nz.

Small changes can keep you warm and add up to big savings on your annual power bill



Are you on the cheapest power plan that best suits your whānau?

Check to save



Only heat the rooms you're using and close doors to others

save \$320



Switch off power-hungry appliances – like heated towel rails or second fridges

save \$200



Seal sneaky gaps around windows, doors and cat flaps

save \$100



Clean your heat pump filter every couple of months

save \$50



Set your heat pump to a maximum of 21 degrees

save \$40



Wash your clothes in cold water

save \$30



Switch to LED light bulbs

save \$100



Fix dripping hot taps

save \$175

For more advice and information, visit [consumer.org.nz](https://www.consumer.org.nz) and [eeca.govt.nz](https://www.eeca.govt.nz)