

What uses watt?

How much electricity am I using?

If you want to save electricity (and why wouldn't you?) it helps to focus on the things that use most, and so cost you the most money.

Some electrical items use a lot of electricity. Others don't. As a rule, those with moving parts or which produce heat use much more than those producing light or sound. So if you want to save electricity and money, there's no point worrying about a digital clock or an electric razor since these use so little power you would hardly notice the difference. The big savings lie elsewhere.

Every electrical appliance has a power rating which tells you how much electricity it needs to work. This is usually given in watts (W) or kilowatts (kW). Of course, the **amount** of electricity it uses depends on how long it's on for, and this is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh).

An item like a fridge has a low wattage, but because it's on all the time it'll use a lot of electricity. And although an iron is only used now and again, it uses a lot of electricity so the quicker you do your ironing the better.

Electricity is sold by the kilowatt-hour (kWh) – usually referred to as 'units' on your electricity bill. If you're feeling mathematical you can work out how much a particular appliance costs to run by multiplying its wattage by the amount of time it's on and then by the cost of electricity per kWh.

Here's a list of common appliances and an **average** power rating (the actual power rating can vary a lot depending on size and model).

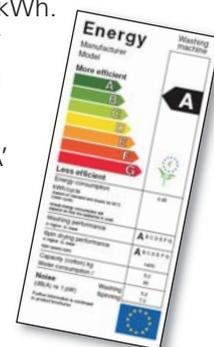
Electric shower	4000W	Electric mower	1200W
Immersion heater	3000W	Electric drill	800W
Dishwasher	3000W	Microwave	750W
Washing machine	2500W	Vacuum cleaner	750W
Tumble dryer	2500W	Hairdryer	500W
Kettle	2000W	Plasma TV	400W
Electric fire	2000W	Fridge-freezer	300W
Deep fryer	2000W	Freezer	300W
Toaster	1400W	Heating blanket	200W
Oil-filled radiator	1500W	Fridge	100W
Iron	1200W	Video, DVD or CD	100W
Oven	1200W	PC/laptop	100W
Grill/hob	1200W	LCD TV	100W



Most of a household's electricity bill goes on appliances like dishwashers

For example, let's say you have a 1200W oven (i.e. 1.2kW) and you use this to cook a roast dinner in three hours. The electricity used is 1.2 (kW) x 3 (hours) = 3.6kWh.

If your electricity costs 14p per kWh (and of course it can vary enormously) then this will cost you **3.6 x 14 = 50.4p**. This shows you why energy-efficient goods – those rated 'A' on energy labels (right) save you money.



Smart meters

Many homes now have smart meters that show how much electricity is being used at the present time, as well as how much was used last week, last month etc. They also tell you what your current use will cost you. The government wants to see these gadgets in all homes so that householders will be able to monitor their electricity usage more closely.

Lighting

Although a single light doesn't use much electricity (60-100W for a typical old-fashioned bulb), our homes can have dozens of them, so it adds up to quite a lot – around a fifth of an average home's electricity bill. As we move to low-energy lightbulbs the amount we spend on lighting will go down, but it is still worth checking that you're not leaving lights on unnecessarily.



Look out for the energy label and chose A-rated items.

Turn over for energy saving tips ▶

Tips for lower energy bills

Happy paying your gas and electricity supplier more money than you need to?

Thought not. Here are 15 ways to cut your bills ...

1) **Keep the oven door shut as much as possible;** every time you open it, nearly a quarter of the heat escapes.



2) **Give your clothes a day in the sun;** and give your tumble drier a break. Clothes dried in the fresh air feel great, and there are drying days in winter, too.

3) **Food in the oven cooks faster when the air inside flows freely,** so avoid putting foil on the racks.

4) **Don't leave your phone on charge all night.** It only needs three hours – and try not to leave the TV and other kit on stand-by.

5) **Be a friend to your freezer.** Defrost it regularly to help it run more efficiently.

6) **Catch 'em young.** Encourage your children to switch off electric toys and lights that they're not using. They'll soon get the hang of saving energy.



7) **Dodge the draught!**

Fit draught-excluders to your front door, letter box and key hole, and draw your curtains at dusk to keep the heat in.

8) **When boiling water, only fill the kettle with as much as you'll actually use** (but make sure you cover the metal element at the base).

9) **Buying a new TV, washing machine or dishwasher?** Look out for the Energy Saving Trust 'recommended' logo, and remember: the bigger the TV, the more energy it'll use.



10) **Dimmer is smarter.** Use your dimmer switches to reduce the amount of energy used to light your room.

11) **Wait until you have a full load before putting on a wash.** Two half-loads use more energy (and water) than one full load.



12) **Sleep tight.** Make sure all the lights are turned off when you go to bed, or use a low-wattage night light if you do need to leave one on.

13) **Turn your heating down by 1 degree.** You'll hardly notice the change in temperature, but it'll make a big difference to your heating bill.

14) **Put your fridge in a good spot.** Somewhere the air can circulate behind it, but not next to a cooker or radiator.

15) **New computer?** Remember a laptop typically uses around 85% less energy than a new desktop PC.

For free domestic energy advice, call **0800 512 012** *
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We are a national charity that shares our knowledge and experience to help people change the way they think and act on energy.



More energy advice at
cse.org.uk/advice