

Central heating controls

Making the most of the system

Getting a grip on your central heating controls will help heat your house more effectively and cut your fuel bills.

Timer or programmer

The timer or programmer allows you 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 7.30am, leave for work at 8.30am and get home at 6.00pm. It would make sense to set the heating to turn on at 7:00am, off at 8.00am and on again at 5.30pm. 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 even more than two cycles during the day.

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

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

'24hrs' or 'On' means the heating stays on all the time.

'Off' means the heating will remain off all the time.

'All day', means 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.

'Boost' or '+1hr' switches the heating on for a one hour 'boost' of heat.

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

Photos | TRV, www.iStock.com / Mike Sleigh; room thermostat, www.iStock.com / Joe Gough



Radiator valves put you in control and save money

Setting the **hot water** timing depends on the type of boiler you have. If you have a hot-water tank the water in the tank will need to be heated up periodically during the course of the day. The amount of times the water needs to be heated up depends on how big and how well insulated the hot-water tank is, and how much water your household uses.

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 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' illnesses. Some people need to keep their home warmer due to their age or health problems.



Thermostatic radiator valves

Thermostatic Radiator Valves or TRVs (see photo above) 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 at to medium or high, whilst leaving the upstairs radiators low, or even turning them off altogether.

Turn your room thermostat down by 1°C. You'll barely notice the difference in temperature, but you could cut your heating bills by around £55 a year.



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.



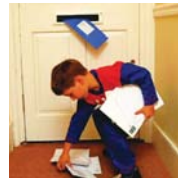
2) **Give your clothes a day in the sun;** and give your tumble drier a break. Clothes dried in the fresh air feel great, and there are drying days in winter, too.

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.



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