



KEEPING

Power costs down

A big power bill is difficult at any time, but can be especially tough in winter. Here are some easy ways to cut down on power, helping you save cash and the environment.

Remember to take a sensible approach to power saving, and don't let yourself get so cold in winter that your health is affected.

Turn off:

- lights if you leave a room for more than a minute
- all appliances at the wall instead of leaving them on standby
- mobile phone chargers when you've finished using them. Things like lights and appliances left on wastes about \$100 of power a year!

Open a window a little when showering or cooking, or use an extractor fan or range hood if one is fitted. The less moisture in the air, the easier it is to heat. Keep bedroom windows open 10-20cm at night, unless it is very cold or stormy.

Keep lids on pots when you're cooking and make sure the lids fit well, as this saves energy and reduces steam in the kitchen. Also, match the pot size to the element.

Use energy-saving settings on your appliances if they have one.

Stop cold air sneaking under your door by making a 'door snake' (stuff old rugby socks with scrap material).

Open curtains in the morning and close them just before dark to keep in the warmth. Keep your windows clean, so the sun will be more effective in warming your house. Avoid mounting curtains on brackets off the wall as warm air drops behind, losing heat and causing condensation.

Wash your clothes with cold water and only do a full wash. This could save you more than \$100 a year (based on 20 washes a month).

Use cold water when you're rinsing dishes and filling the jug. Boil only as much water as you need. If you do have boiled water left over in the jug, pour it into a Thermos for use later.

Use energy-efficient light bulb. Kāinga Ora recommends Ecobulbs - these cost around \$6 each, but will last up to ten times longer which can save you about \$65 a year.

Have a quick shower. If a family of four reduced their showers by two minutes each day, they'd save over \$200 a year.

Dry your washing outside or set up a covered area outside for clothes drying. Drying clothes inside releases moisture into the air and make it harder to heat. If using a clothes dryer, make sure its vented to the outside of your home.

Look at the energy rating stars when buying an appliance. The more stars on the energy rating label the less it will cost to run. This is especially important for fridges which run 24 hours a day.

Use thermostats and timers so your heaters only come on when you need them and automatically turn off once the right temperature is reached.

Use a microwave for cooking as much as possible, because they use less power than conventional ovens.

Speak to your supplier. You may qualify for a low-user price plan designed for small households or low power users. They offer significant savings, so ask if a low-user plan is right for you. Another option may be a pre-paid meter, which helps you control your power usage by paying for your power as you use it instead of getting a monthly bill. Ask for advice though as the power rates may be higher.

Talk to us on 0800 801 601

Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities can help by replacing washers on leaky hot water taps, turning down the water temperature at the tap if you feel it's too hot, or installing a low flow shower. Call us free on **0800 801 601**, or visit **kaingaora.govt.nz**

If you have a hearing impairment, you can contact us using the NZ Relay Service on www.nzrelay.co.nz