

Lighting

The low-energy bulb revolution

Energy-saving light bulbs use up to 80% less electricity than the old bulbs but produce the same amount of light. And they last around 10 times longer.

From 2011, all bulbs manufactured in or imported into the EU were required to meet new energy efficiency standards. It was a case of 'out with the old, in with the new'. And since they use just a fraction of the electricity that their predecessors use, the new bulbs can save an average household around £3.00 per light bulb, per year.

Like the old-style bulbs, energy-saving ones come in all shapes and sizes. You can buy them for bayonet or screw fittings. They are often shaped like traditional light bulbs so they don't stick out of your lampshade. Even dimmable low-energy bulbs have now been developed.

What's more, the most recent models have a softer and warmer light, very similar to the old-fashioned bulbs that they are replacing. And while they still take a short while to warm up to full brightness, the decent brands are improving in this respect. Look out for bulbs carrying the Energy Saving Trust 'recommended' label, as they reach a target brightness very quickly.



Because they use less electricity, energy-saving bulbs have lower wattages than traditional bulbs. This means you can replace an old-style 100W bulb with a 25W one, and it'll give the same light while using a quarter of the electricity (see table below). In fact, because the useful measure of a bulb is actually how **bright** it is, they are now sold by **lumens** which measure light, rather than watts, which measure electricity (see the photo opposite). The **more lumens**, the **brighter the bulb**.

Comparing watts and lumens



Traditional bulb	Energy saving bulb	Equivalent in Lumens
100W	20-25W	1,300
60W	11-19W	700
40W	8-10W	400
25W	5W	200



Lightbulb packaging now clearly states the bulb's strength in lumens as well as watts

Other types of lighting

Halogen bulbs use less energy than traditional bulbs. But, rooms lit with halogen bulbs usually have lots of fittings – dozens in some cases – so between them will use a lot of energy. Energy Saving Trust Recommended halogen bulbs use around 30% less energy than traditional halogens.

Light emitting diodes (LEDs) are mostly found as the little lights on TVs or on bike lights. But, as they are very energy efficient indeed, they'll soon replace a wide variety of bulbs including traditional lightbulbs, halogen spotlights and security lights.



Finally, if you're worried about your electricity bill, one of the best things you can do is keep an eye on your lighting. Are lights switched off when they're not needed? Are lights left on in unoccupied rooms, or in passage ways and landings? Children particularly need to be reminded to switch off the lights in their bedrooms. Bless 'em.

If a bulb carries the blue 'Recommended' logo it will produce light of a similar warmth to a traditional bulb, get bright quickly and last for at least 6,000 hours.



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 don't put 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.**



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The Centre for Sustainable Energy is a national charity (no 298740) that helps people change the way they think and act on energy.

CSE's Home Energy Team offers free advice on domestic energy use to householders in Bristol and Somerset (including the unitary authorities of North Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset).



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