

Room heaters

Using supplementary heating

Room heaters are used to heat a small space and are normally portable or fitted to a wall. Most room heaters use gas or electricity.

Room heaters are convenient appliances that provide focused and localised heat which is particularly suitable in a room for people that are elderly, ill or with limited mobility. But they can be expensive.

They consume a lot of gas or electricity if used to heat up a space quickly, and it's not a good idea to use room heaters instead of a central heating system as it is likely to cost a lot more.

Ideally, room heaters should only be used as a secondary or supplementary source of heat. Even then, you should firstly use the right heater for the space you want to heat, and carefully control the temperature and the time you have the heater on.

Electric room heaters

These include 'radiant' bar fires (below, picture 1), warm air heaters (2), fan heaters (3) and oil-filled radiators (4). They are all expensive to run and not appropriate as a main heat source.

They are all considered to be 100% efficient (i.e. they turn all the electrical energy they use into heat), but some cost

Electric room heaters: running costs	
Type of heater	Average cost to run
Radiant bar fire 1	36.5p per hour
Halogen heater	36.5p per hour
Convector heater 2	24.2p per hour
Fan heater 3	24.2p per hour
Oil-filled radiator 4	12.2p per hour

NB These costs will vary as electricity prices change.

more to run than others. The cheapest to run are oil-filled radiators, and the most expensive are bar fires. If you have to use an electric room heater, use it only when necessary and consider the following:

- Use a timer if it has one, if not, you can buy a timeswitch for the plug from a hardware shop.
- If the heater has a thermostat make sure it's not turned up too high.
- If you are on Economy 7, avoid using electric room heaters during peak hours if you can. Better to use night storage heaters that are charged at night.

Gas room heaters

These include traditional gas fires (5), convector heaters (6), open gas fires (7) and bottled-gas heaters (8). All can be run on mains gas or liquid petroleum gas (LPG). Bottled gas heaters, gas convector heaters and paraffin stoves don't need flues (chimneys). However, the water vapour they produce can cause condensation which will lead to damp and mould problems if the room is poorly ventilated.

Gas room heaters: running costs

Type of heater	Average cost per hour (mains gas)	Average cost per hour (LPG)
Radiant gas fire (on full) 5	34.7p	53.4p
Radiant gas fire (on low) 5	6.9p	10.7p
Gas convector heater 6	20.8p	32.0p
Open gas fire 7	55.6p	85.4p

NB These costs will vary as gas prices change.



If you are on mains gas, then gas central heating is the best way to heat your home. If you have to use electricity then the best way is with night storage heaters on an Economy 7 tariff.

Turn over for energy saving tips ▶

Hot parade 1) radiant electric bar fire, 2) electric convector heater, 3) electric fan heater, 4) electric oil-filled radiator, 5) radiant gas fire, 6) gas convector heater, 7) open gas fire, 8) bottled gas fire



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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