



# SMATE

## Save Money and The Environment

Cost saving tips that help you save money – and become  
more environmentally friendly  
Version 5

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## Introduction

SMATE is an easy way to 'get your green-on' and save yourself some serious money.

By simply making some small lifestyle changes, we can all do a lot to help reduce greenhouse gasses and lessen our impact on the environment.

And what's good for Mother Earth, is good for your pocket too!

The good news is, going green is easier than you think.

This practical guide contains some top tips on the easiest and quickest actions you can take today. Starting with some easy ways to cut your energy consumption.

With UK gas and electricity prices more than doubling since 2005, one of the best ways to tackle rising household energy bills is to become more energy efficient. To find out how, visit our [tips for the home section](#) for further ideas and options.



### Easiest and quickest things to do

#### Switch it off

Yep it's as simple as that – If you are not using it, turn it off.

This applies across the board from anything that's plugged into a socket, through to switching off the car rather than idling at traffic lights or outside the school gates, or turning off the radiators in rooms you don't use frequently.



#### Turn it down

Turning down your room thermostat by just one degree will save around £80 on the energy bill for a typical family home—and most people don't even notice the change.

The Energy Saving Trust recommends heating your home at between 18 and 21 degrees C and wearing a jumper. Plus, there's no need to keep your heating on 24 hours a day.

Washing your clothes at 30 degrees C is another great energy saving tip. According to the Energy Saving Trust you'll use around 40% less electricity over the year, and today's modern powders and detergents work just as well when going washing at this lower temperature.



#### Use it again

That bottle, that bag - the biggest change you can make is to use it again. A reusable water bottle can save you up to £260 per annum! Do the same with a reusable eco coffee cup and save another £65 per annum.



#### Slow it down

When driving on motorways or A roads, slowing down is a very easy way to improve your fuel consumption and save money!

You'll get on average 17% more miles per gallon (mpg) just by driving at 60 rather than 70 miles per hour (mph). If we do the maths, then someone driving 8,000 miles a year in a petrol car will save around £178.00 a year – more than enough to pay for their Amazon or Netflix annual subscription. If they drive a diesel car, they'll still save about £159.00—which equates to a premium Netflix subscription.



Sticking to the speed limit will also generate some impressive results. Research by What Car? found that doing 80mph uses up to 25% more fuel than doing 70mph.

Other tips for improving fuel efficiency include:

- Drive smarter – accelerate and brake gently, changing to a higher gear as soon as possible to save up to 30% in fuel
- Check your tyres – over or under inflated tyres will affect overall fuel economy
- Don't get dragged down – an empty roof rack or cycle carrier adds 16% drag at 70mph, while an empty roof box adds 39%, making your vehicle much less fuel efficient. Driving with an open window has a similar effect
- Turn off the AC – unless it's really cold or uncomfortably warm in the car, leave the air-con turned off because it burns more fuel. The same goes for heated windscreens, demisters and other electrical appliances.

## Tips for the home



### Use green energy

Switch to a green tariff from your energy supplier to ensure that the energy you use comes from renewable energy sources like solar, biomass, hydro or wind.

The percentage of electricity generated from renewable sources has been rising steadily in the UK, and now accounts for 28% of all power generation.

Most energy suppliers offer 'green' electricity tariffs that support renewable energy. There are two main types:

- Green supply tariffs – some or all of the electricity you buy is 'matched' by purchases of renewable energy that your supplier makes on your behalf. Many green tariffs will state that your supply is 100% renewable.
- Green fund – this usually involves paying a premium to contribute to a fund that will be used to support new renewable energy developments. While your existing electricity supply may continue as usual, your involvement could help alter the mix of energy sources in the future toward renewable sources.

For more information about green electricity, contact your energy supplier.

### Power

- Turn lights off whenever you leave a room and adjust curtains and blinds to let in as much natural light as possible during the day. This simple act could save your household around £14.00 per person a year.
- Don't leave appliances on standby or on charge for no reason. Some TVs in standby mode use 80% of the energy they do when fully turned on! By switching off, you could save up to £30 per person a year.
- Other tips for reducing TV power consumption
  - Take care when buying your large TV – Using typical numbers for power use on a 50inch screen
    - Plasma is approx. 300Watts, LCD is 150 watts and LED is 100 Watts. QLED vs OLED are basically the same.
    - Switching from Plasma to LED means a saving of £47.50 per annum



- Lower the backlight/brightness setting. This is by far the biggest drain on your power, and the lower you can get your brightness, the less power your TV will consume. Placing your TV in a dark or dimly lit environment will help you avoid needing it to be so bright.
  - A lot of TVs have a “Quick Start” feature. This usually means that they stay in a standby mode when you press the power button instead of shutting off completely. Turning these features off can help, but some models also allow you to hold the power button on the remote to shut down completely.
  - Most TVs today feature a light sensor that can adjust the TV's brightness to the room. Instead of having the TV constantly run at a static brightness, this feature can help reduce consumption by lowering the brightness when it isn't needed.
  - If you often fall asleep in front of the TV at night, make use of its sleep timer feature. This greatly reduces consumption, since hours of playtime that would be used while you're sleeping will instead be kept in your pocket.
- Use energy saving light bulbs (LED is currently best). Lasting 12 times longer than a normal light bulb, each one will save you about £100 over its lifetime! That all adds up to saving of around £35 per person a year.
  - Avoid using plug-in air fresheners. Instead, instead try using standalone gel pouches or essential oil diffusers.
  - Don't leave fridge or freezer doors open for long periods and always let food cool first before storing. This helps maintain your appliance's correct operating temperature, which in turn saves energy and money.
  - Defrost your fridges and freezers regularly to keep them running efficiently and cheaply.
  - Cooking requires a lot of energy consumption but this can be extensively reduced. For example, don't overheat ovens or hobs and use lids on pans.
  - Try using alternative cooking devices such as steamers, pressure cookers, slow cookers, toasters or microwaves. A microwave uses 70-90% less energy than a regular oven!
  - When using a washing machine, dishwasher or tumble dryer, operate them with full loads. If this isn't achievable, use the half load or economy settings.
  - Don't fill your kettle too full. By only boiling the actual amount of water you need can save your household around £6 per person a year
  - Fan assisted ovens use 20% less energy than conventional ovens.
  - When replacing old white goods, check out the EU energy label on the products you plan to buy. With ratings ranging from A++ (most efficient) to G (least efficient), the more efficient the machine, the cheaper it is to operate!



### Heating

- Turn your thermostat down by 1°C. Most people are comfortable in a room temperature of 19°C. This small change could cut your energy bills by up to 10%. Saving approx. £80 per person per annum.
- Close curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows.
- Your water thermostat doesn't need to be set higher than 60°C.
- Draught-proof your windows and doors. If your windows are not double glazed, an affordable short-term solution is to tape specially designed polythene across the windows. You will find a range of these products at your local DIY store. You could save around £20 per person a year.



- Simply insulating your floor can save a third of tonne of CO2 each year – keeping your house warmer for less. Timber floors can be insulated by lifting the floorboards and laying mineral wool insulation, supported by netting, between the joists. This can be carried out as a DIY job for around £100 and should pay itself back within 2 years.
- You can also use a regular silicon tube sealant to fill gaps between floorboards and skirting boards to stop draughts. A note of warning, don't block under-floor airbricks in your outside walls as floorboards will rot without adequate ventilation. This can be carried out as a DIY job costing around £20, it will repay itself within 1-2 years. Alternatively, hire a professional to carry out the work for you.
- Fitted carpets reduce heat loss through floors much more than vinyl coverings or wooden floors. You can improve floor insulation yet further by fitting a good quality underlay.
- Always insulate your hot water pipes. It costs just £1 per metre and will save you around £5 per year!
- Ensure you have a good fitting insulating jacket for your hot water tank. It should be at least 75mm (3") thick. These cost around £10 and will pay for themselves within a few months. Alternatively, if you are unable to fit a jacket onto your tank, you can insulate using heat resistant spray foam.
- 25% of a house's heat is lost through the roof. Depending on the size of your house, simply installing the recommended 270mm of loft insulation material could save between £180 - £220 a year on your heating bills and nearly 1.5 tonnes of CO2 per year. Costing around £230 to install (either using a professional installer or as a DIY task) and will repay itself in a year (if you previously had no insulation). If you're on means-tested benefits, there are grants available to help fund loft insulation. For information about what grants are available, contact the 'Warm Front Team' on Freephone 0800 316 2814.

## Saving Water



- Use a bowl in the sink when washing fruit, vegetables or dishes. You can then use the waste water to water your plants.
- Fill a jug of water and put it in the fridge for when you want a cool drink.
- Turn off the tap when you clean your teeth. A running tap uses up to nine litres of water a minute.
- Wait until you have a full load before using your washing machine or your dishwasher.
- If possible, take a shower instead of a bath. A five-minute shower uses about 40 litres of water – about half the volume of a standard bath. But a power shower can use more water than a bath in less than five minutes.
- Use a water-saving device in your lavatory cistern. Depending on the size of your cistern, you could save from one to three litres each time you flush the lavatory.
- Use a watering can in the garden instead of a sprinkler or a hosepipe. Garden sprinklers and hosepipes left running can use between 500 and 1,000 litres of water an hour.
- Think about fitting a water butt to collect rainwater off your roof. Water butts usually store about 200 litres.
- Check your property regularly for leaks in your plumbing. Replace worn tap washers for a quick and cheap way of saving water. Ensure your water pipes and external taps are lagged in time for the winter months. If they burst, they will waste a great deal of water.
- Save water in the garden by collecting rainwater from the roof in a water butt, and give your plants a soaking once a week rather than watering daily. Water your plants in the early mornings or evenings to reduce the amount lost through evaporation.



## References

East Riding Council – [Sustainable home guide](#)

The Energy Saving Trust - [Energy Saving Quick Wins](#)

The Sun – [Waste warriors](#)

The telegraph – [Saving water](#)