# 10 easy ways to save energy

Over the last few years, the term carbon footprint and its inherent messages have become part of national consciousness – drive less, walk more and for goodness sake, don't fly! But even if you routinely cycle to work and choose the Norfolk Broads over the Caribbean for your annual hols, you're probably not as eco-savvy as you imagine.

'Each UK household produces six tonnes of $CO_2$ a year,' explains *at home* magazine's eco expert, Rob Holdway, 'which is double the annual emissions from the average car.' These emissions result from energy used to heat our homes and power the appliances within it, most of which is generated from fossil fuels.' So how can we reduce the amount of energy we waste? Let's find out…

## 1 Sort out your fridge

Fridges use about 15% of your total household power, so it's vital yours is working efficiently. A good tip is to clean the coils if they are dusty or covered in grime they can't work the way they should. And keep your fridge full, as food retains cold better than air.

**2 Look for labels** When buying any product that uses energy – including everything from washing machines to kettles, make sure that you look for the Energy Saving Recommended label or European energy label rating of A or higher.

**3 Change your light bulbs** Around 95% of the power used by standard bulbs is emitted as heat, not light. Energy-saving light bulbs, however, use only one-fifth to one-quarter of the amount of power of ordinary bulbs and last 10 to 12 times longer.

**4 Turn down your thermostat** It sounds obvious but turning your thermostat down by just one degree could reduce carbon emissions and cut your fuel bills by up to 10%. So dig out those woolly jumpers this winter instead of cranking up the central heating.

**5 Power down** Enabling your computer's power saving features means that after periods of inactivity, it will go into sleep mode. This saves huge amounts of energy, but if you won't be using it for long periods – turn your computer off.

**6 Improve your insulation** More than half of the heat lost in your home escapes through the walls and roof. Cavity wall insulation costs about £450, usually takes just a couple of hours to install, and could save you £92 a year on fuel bills, as well as reducing your carbon footprint.

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**7 Generate your own** If you'd like to cease giving money to the energy suppliers altogether, you could try generating your own home energy by harnessing the power of the wind and sun with a microwind turbine and solar photovoltaic system.

**8 Be kitchen savvy** Cover pots while cooking to waste less energy. Once water is boiled, turn the heat down – lightly boiling water is the same temperature as a roaring boil. The bottom of your pan should be the same size as the burner to use the minimum amount of energy.
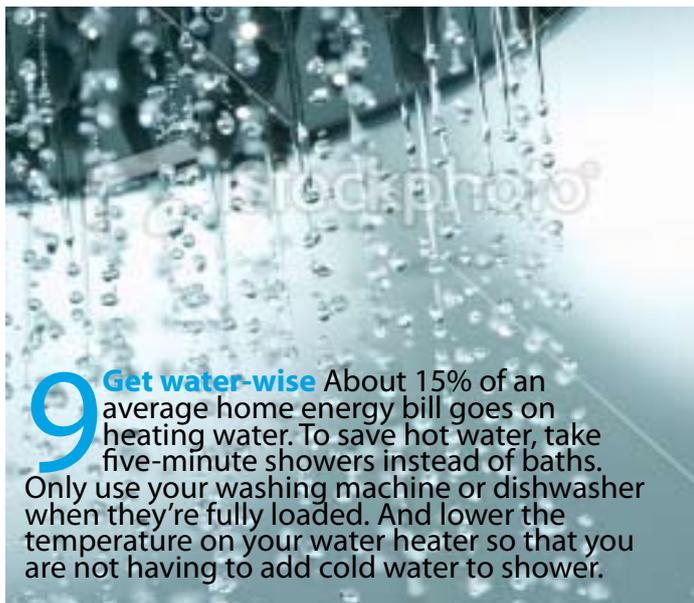
**9 Get water-wise** About 15% of an average home energy bill goes on heating water. To save hot water, take five-minute showers instead of baths. Only use your washing machine or dishwasher when they're fully loaded. And lower the temperature on your water heater so that you are not having to add cold water to shower.

**10 Switch suppliers** Switching to a green energy tariff, could save two tonnes of $CO_2$ a year, so choose carefully. 'By law, all electricity suppliers must buy a proportion of their power from renewable sources, currently 8%,' explains Rob. 'Many suppliers then sell this green energy to the minority of customers who've signed up to a green energy tariff. So despite your good wishes in requesting renewable energy, you may be helping the supplier to meet targets it's legally obliged to achieve. What's more, if a supplier buys more than its required quota of green energy it receives credits in the form of a Renewable Obligation Certificate (ROC). These ROCs can then be sold onto other suppliers who use them to meet targets. To prevent suppliers doing this we must ensure demand outstrips supply, and if 500,000 homes sign up to a 100% green energy tariff this year, this will be achieved. This would force investment into increasing renewable energy capacity in the UK.'

**Do it yourself** If you're serious about generating your own energy, one of the easiest ways is through a photovoltaic system, such as that offered by npower, which will convert the sun's natural power into electricity and heat water. Effective even on cloudy days, solar panels emit no harmful pollution and will significantly boost your green credentials. For more information on how you can save money and protect our planet, visit www.npower.com/solar