



Take home task

This take home task focuses on helping you take a more active approach to managing the way you heat your home and creating an action plan to help make your home cosy.

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH YOUR HEATING CONTROLS

Please note that this activity is primarily relevant for people with central heating systems, although elements will be relevant to householders using different heating sources.

Getting to know your heating controls

Let's be honest – very few people have had the time or inclination to sit down and read their heating system's manual to truly understand how their system works – but if you want to actively manage the heating of your home, getting to grips with your heating controls is the sensible place to start. Dig out your copy of the manual – or search for the instructions online – and try the following:

Taking control

Setting the programme

1. Programme your timer so that the heating is only on when you are in the house. If you would like to come home to warm house, time how many minutes it takes for your home to warm up after the boiler is switched on, and set the heating to come on that length of time prior to your arrival.
2. Decide if you need the heating on all night – and if not, use this 'warm up time' to decide what time the boiler needs to go on prior to your waking up. You also can do a similar exercise to find out how quickly your home cools to decide when it should shut off at night.
3. Get out your diary and put in a regular reminder to yourself to tweak the programming as the days get longer and shorter.

Setting the temperature

The World Health Organisation recommends a temperature range of 18 to 21°C as suitable for most people (the elderly, very young, and infirm may require warmer conditions).

1. Check your thermostat.

If you have a room thermostat, this will only be measuring the temperature in the part of the house where it is positioned, which may be different from the temperature of your main living area. Set your room thermostat to 21°C and then use a room thermometer to measure the actual temperature of your living space. What thermostat setting do you need for the thermometer to read 21°C?

2. Find out your perfect temperature – and change it!

We all have our own preferred room temperature. Use a room thermometer to find out yours. Bear in mind that if you're being active you are likely to feel comfortable at a lower temperature than if you've been sitting still for a while. If your preferred temperature is higher than 18°C, you might like to consider acclimatising yourself to a lower temperature. Do this by slowly reducing the room temperature by half a degree each week. Each 1°C reduction can result in a 10% reduction in energy used to heat your home.

3. Actively manage heating in your home

Get in the habit of turning radiators down in rooms you aren't occupying, and drawing curtains at dusk and tucking them behind radiators. Combined with regular retuning of your heating programme this can make big saving in fuel, whilst ensuring your home is warm when and where you need it.

KEEPING COSY

Creating your personal home insulation action plan

Having got smart about how we heat our homes, the next step is ensuring the heat doesn't escape. Improving insulation in our homes can involve a whole range of activities, from quick and simple DIY projects to major refurbishments. What we can undertake depends on the type of home we live in and the resources available to us. Trying to tackle everything at once can be daunting, but using the checklist below it's possible to identify and prioritise actions we'd like to take and create a manageable schedule to make them happen. Using the table below, identify what actions might be relevant to you for each different area of your home. Decide which you would like to take immediately, in the next few months, or to keep as a project for the longer term.

Area	Possible actions	Likely cost	Available grants Check online for availability	Priority eg immediate, medium or long term
Walls				
Doors				
Windows				
Loft				
Floor				

The following table with information on costs and payback time may help. Please note that these figures are taken from the Energy Saving Trust website.¹ They are estimates based on a gas-heated, semi-detached house with three bedrooms, no insulation, and single glazed windows.

Action	Annual potential CO ₂ saving	Approx. annual £ saving (3.67p per kWh)	Cost to install	Payback period
External wall insulation	1.9 tonnes	£385	£10,500-£14,500	27-38 years
Internal wall insulation	1.8 tonnes	£365	£5,500-£8,500	14-23 years
Loft insulation	0.73 tonnes	£145	£150-£250	1-2 years
Double glazing	650kg	£130	£2,500-6,500	19-50 years
Cavity wall insulation	560kg	£250	£150-£250	Under a year
Secondary glazing	420kg	£85	£600-800	7-9.5 years
Floor insulation	240kg	£50	£100 - ??	2 years upwards
Draught-proofing	120kg	£25	£100	4 years

¹ Energy Saving Trust website: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Energy-saving-assumptions>, viewed 7 July 2011 and <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Home-improvements-and-products/Home-insulation-glazing/Glazing>
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