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Energy efficiency in the home

Using electricity and gas efficiently is not just good for the environment—it can also help you save money on your bills. Simple actions such as switching off the TV at the wall rather than leaving it on standby can help make a difference. There are lots of other ways you can reduce the amount of energy your household uses.

How can I make my home more energy efficient?

Household appliances can account for up to a third of your home energy use. Using appliances incorrectly or inefficiently may cancel out the savings from purchasing energy efficient products. There are a range of steps you can take at little or no cost to reduce energy consumption in your home.

In living areas:

- install energy efficient lighting
- turn lights off when not needed
- switch off appliances at the wall
- buy appliances with the best energy efficiency rating that you can afford
- close your curtains and blinds at night to protect against cold drafts and open them during the day to let in warming sunlight
- use ceiling fans rather than air conditioners
- set your heating between 18°C and 21°C and the air conditioner between 23°C and 26°C
- turn heating and air-conditioning off at night.

In the kitchen:

- provide space for air to circulate around the fridge and ensure door seals are intact
- use an electric frypan, pressure cooker or microwave rather than the oven
- cover pots and pans to reduce cooking time
- only run the dishwasher when full
- ensure oven seals are not broken.

In the bathroom and laundry:

- use your washing machine only when you have a full load and use cold water where possible
- clothes dryers can be expensive to run so try to use sparingly. Use airing racks and lines inside to fully or partly dry your washing
- lower the water heater thermostat to between 60°C and 65°C
- reduce hot water use by installing a water efficient shower head.

In outdoor areas:

- allow space for a washing line so you can use the sun to dry your clothes
- install solar lighting in your garden
- use planting to create shaded areas to protect the inside of your home from direct sun.

When building or renovating:

- insulate ceilings and walls to retain warm air in winter and cool air in summer
- install energy efficient LED and compact fluorescent lighting
- replace older appliances with more energy efficient appliances
- invest in an efficient hot water system—either solar, gas or heat pump.

Quick tip

Grants and rebates may be available to you for energy saving equipment that you install in your home. Visit the Australian Government's Living Greener website (www.livinggreener.gov.au) for details about grants and rebates available in your state or territory.

What to keep in mind when buying new appliances

New appliances, especially for heating and cooling your home, can be expensive. It is therefore important to take some time to choose the right appliance for your needs. Appliances with a higher energy efficiency rating may cost more to purchase but lower running costs will mean you save energy and money.

For further information about choosing energy efficient appliances, see the Australian Government's Energy Rating website (www.energyrating.gov.au).

Comparing energy contracts

Another way to save money on your energy is to shop around and compare energy contracts. As well as varying in price and duration, energy contracts may have different payment options, fees and can include other incentives such as movie tickets and magazine subscriptions.

If you are thinking of switching contracts it is important that you take some time to compare the different offers available to you. You should consider all the elements of the offer, including the price, to make sure it is suitable.

Quick tip

A good way to compare energy contracts is to use a price comparison website.

Energy Made Easy (www.energymadeeasy.gov.au) is an independent government website operated by the AER.

Energy Made Easy also provides tips on energy efficiency.

More information

Australian Energy Regulator

AER Infoline 1300 585 165

AER website www.aer.gov.au

Energy Made Easy www.energymadeeasy.gov.au

Other contacts

Indigenous Infoline 1300 303 143

For information in languages other than English call 13 1450 and ask for 1300 585 165

Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727 and ask for 1300 585 165

TTY users phone 13 3677 and ask for 1300 585 165

Internet relay users connect to the National Relay Service (www.relayservice.com.au) and ask for 1300 585 165

Australian and state and territory government contacts

Government websites that provide information on ways to save energy, grants and rebates, solar power and other energy saving initiatives.

Australian Government

Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency
www.climatechange.gov.au
www.livinggreener.gov.au/energy

For detailed information on efficient appliance use and home design tips, see the Australian Government's technical guide for home energy use, available at www.yourhome.gov.au/technical

Australian Capital Territory

Environment and Sustainable Development
www.environment.act.gov.au
www.actsmart.act.gov.au

New South Wales

Office of Environment and Heritage
www.environment.nsw.gov.au
www.savepower.nsw.gov.au

Northern Territory

Department Lands, Planning and Environment
www.nretas.nt.gov.au/environment-protection/sustainability/greenhouse

Queensland

Department of Energy and Water Supply
www.cleanenergy.qld.gov.au

South Australia

Government of South Australia
www.sa.gov.au/energy

Tasmania

Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources
www.dier.tas.gov.au/energy/energy_efficiency

Victoria

Victorian Department of Primary Industries
www.dpi.vic.gov.au/energy

Sustainability Victoria
www.sustainability.vic.gov.au

Western Australia

Department of Finance—Public Utilities Office
www.finance.wa.gov.au

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