

Energy monitors

Your electricity use in real time

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Energy monitors display electricity consumption in units called kilowatt hours (kWh). Electricity bills use the same unit (1 unit on your bill = 1kWh) so your energy monitor can show you the cost of the electricity you are using and will be billed for.

When the monitor is working, each time you turn a different light or appliances on or off you'll be able to see this on the display. It will tell you which things in your house use the most energy. And this can help you decide which energy-hungry appliances to use sparingly in order to cut your fuel costs.

There are many different energy monitors to choose from, each with a variety of features. **Some monitors allow you to:**

- Track your energy use over time.
- Download your information onto your computer for further analysis.
- Carry your monitor around your home so you can check on your energy use more closely.
- Use your monitor in conjunction with socket monitors to measure the energy use of particular appliances.
- Set different electricity tariffs at different times of day. This is handy if you're on Economy 7.
- Set daily electricity usage targets, giving you an energy 'budget' to try to stick to.
- Set a 'usage alarm' to alert you when you have exceeded a set amount of electricity use.



In yer face! Energy monitors appeal to children who can become quite motivated to save electricity

Monitors cost around £30–40 and are easy to install. Most are small enough to hold in your hand and can be fixed by a bracket to the wall or just put somewhere visible like on a shelf. Sometimes energy suppliers give monitors to their customers for free.

How do they work?

Energy monitors come in two parts. Firstly a sensor which clips onto the power cable of your electricity meter. This measures the amount of electricity passing through it and sends this information to the second part, a visual display unit.

Changing your habits

When you first get a monitor you can use it to assess your energy use thoroughly. By turning off all lights and



In due course, all homes will be offered a 'smart meter' which will have an energy monitor attached

See all our energy advice leaflets at www.cse.org.uk/advice-leaflets

appliances (though not things like the fridge that need to be on all the time) you'll see how much electricity your home uses 'at rest', much as it would be during the night or if everyone was out. This is often referred to as the 'base load'. If you then turn on appliances one by one, you'll get a good idea of which gadgets or appliances use the most electricity.

The next stage is to watch out for unnecessary energy wastage, such as appliances being left on standby, and to try to use energy-hungry devices less frequently or for shorter periods. The monitor acts as a tool to give you an accurate idea of the greatest savings you can make. If everyone in the household gets involved you can work together to bring your electricity use down and saving you money.

Monitoring your usage over the long term is a great way of keeping you on track and ensuring you save money on your bills. Rather than using the monitor as a novelty item and then forgetting about it, try to check how your electricity usage is decreasing over weeks, months or even years.

Monitors are best kept somewhere visible – not in the kitchen drawer ...



Tips to cut your electricity use, and save money ...

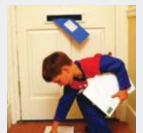


Give your clothes a day in the sun (and give your tumble drier a break). Clothes dried in fresh air feel great, and there are sunny days in winter, too.

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.

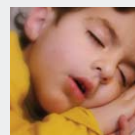
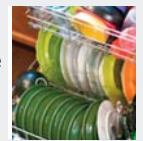


Dodge the draught! Fit draught-excluders to your front door, letter box and key hole, and draw your curtains at dusk to keep the heat in.



Only fill the kettle with as much water as you actually need (but make sure you cover the metal element at the base).

Wait until you have a full load in your dishwasher or washing machine before doing a wash. Two half-loads use more energy than one full load.



Sleep tight. Make sure all the lights are turned off when you go to bed. You can get low-wattage night lights for children's rooms or landings.

Buying a new appliance? Check the energy label, and buy A-rated goods for the most efficient.



More energy-saving advice at www.cse.org.uk/advice



We have lots more fact sheets like this on electricity use in the home: Economy 7; Switching energy supplier; Lighting; Reading your gas or electricity meter, Room heaters; Understanding your electricity bill; Smart meters; Night storage heaters; and more. See them all at www.cse.org.uk/advice-leaflets



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Charity: 298740
Founded: 1979

The Centre for Sustainable Energy is a national charity that helps people change the way they think and act on energy.

Our Home Energy Team offers free advice on domestic energy use to householders in Bristol, Somerset, Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire and Dorset.



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