

Insulate your loft and stop the 'great escape'

A well-insulated house keeps warmth exactly where you need it – indoors. Loft insulation is a simple and effective way to reduce your heating bills, and you can even do it yourself

Heating your home isn't cheap, and with the price of gas, electricity and oil going up all the time, it seems to cost more every winter to stay warm. To save money you need to stop the heat escaping, and the best way to do this is to insulate your home. The better the insulation, the warmer you'll feel and the more money you'll save.

Even if you have some insulation in your loft you may need a top-up. The recommended depth for mineral wool insulation – the most common material – is 270mm (about 1ft), but there are other materials (usually more expensive) which require different depths.

Loft insulation is effective for at least 40 years, and it will pay for itself over and over again in that time. And there is financial help and other support available to help pay for professional insulation.

How much money will I save?

Cost (installed professionally)	Around £500 *
Annual saving per year	Around £46
Payback time	11 years
DIY cost	£100 to £350 **
DIY payback time	2 to 8 years

These are **estimated** figures which assume you have 50mm of insulation and top it up to the recommended 270mm. If you have no insulation at all, then the savings can be up to £174 a year. If you have 100mm then the saving is around £23 a year.

* Financing options for energy efficiency improvements like loft insulation are available under the Green Deal and ECO. See www.cse.org.uk/greendeal for more information.

** This price depends on products and materials that are assumed to be unsubsidised.



Insulation keeps the heat indoors. People who insulate their loft notice the difference in their comfort and in their fuel bills

Loft insulation isn't just cheap, but easy to install as well

Generally speaking, if your home has an accessible loft with no damp or condensation problems, it will be a good candidate for loft insulation. Mineral wool insulation can be bought in big rolls (also known as 'blankets' or 'quilts') from builders' merchants or DIY stores. Laying this insulation is usually straightforward for either an installer or a competent 'DIY-er'.

For lofts with difficult access – e.g. small hatches and very little space – loft insulation blankets aren't suitable. Instead a loose, fire-retardant insulation material is blown into the loft using specialist equipment. This is a job for a professional installer and can take a few hours depending on the size of the loft.

If you'd like to use your loft for living space, then you could look at insulating the roof of the loft rather than the floor. This is usually done by fitting rigid insulation boards or insulation foil between the roof rafters.

"A quarter of a home's heat is lost through the roof, which is why loft insulation makes such a difference"



Turn over for energy saving tips ▶

Tips for lower energy bills

Happy paying your gas and electricity supplier more money than you need to?

Thought not. Here are 15 ways to cut your bills ...

1) **Keep the oven door shut as much as possible;** every time you open it, nearly a quarter of the heat escapes.



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

3) **Food in the oven cooks faster when the air inside flows freely,** so don't put foil on the racks.

4) **Don't leave your phone on charge all night.** It only needs three hours – and try not to leave the TV and other kit on stand-by.

5) **Be a friend to your freezer.** Defrost it regularly to help it run more efficiently.

6) **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.



7) **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.

8) **When boiling water, only fill the kettle with as much as you'll actually use** (but make sure you cover the metal element at the base).

9) **Buying a new TV, washing machine or dishwasher?** Look out for the Energy Saving Trust 'recommended' logo, and remember: the bigger the TV, the more energy it'll use.



10) **Dimmer is smarter.** Use your dimmer switches to reduce the amount of energy used to light your room.

11) **Wait until you have a full load before putting on a wash.** Two half-loads use more energy (and water) than one full load.



12) **Sleep tight.** Make sure all the lights are turned off when you go to bed, or use a low-wattage night light if you do need to leave one on.

13) **Turn your heating down by 1 degree.** You'll hardly notice the change in temperature, but it'll make a big difference to your heating bill.

14) **Put your fridge in a good spot.** Somewhere the air can circulate behind it, but not next to a cooker or radiator.

15) **New computer?** Remember a laptop typically uses around 85% less energy than a new desktop PC.



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The Centre for Sustainable Energy is a national charity (no 298740) 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 and Somerset (including the unitary authorities of North Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset).

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