

10 top tips for an energy efficient home

Household bills are crippling UK homeowners, and with experts warning price rises on both gas and electricity bills, it's not looking like it will get any better. However, through making some lifestyle changes and making sure your house is energy efficient, homeowners will be able to combat rising costs and even save some money.

Dan Smith, Director of Kent-based glazing specialists, DWL Windows, Door & Conservatories, offers some helpful tips to improve your home's energy efficiency and to help alleviate the stress of rising household bills.

Improve your windows

Windows are a key area where UK homes can experience heat loss. Good, energy efficient windows will keep the warmth in your home and reduce your energy bills. Triple glazing is now available alongside double glazing, so instead of two sheets of glass with a gap between them, there's three.

Residence 9 is arguably the most thermally efficient window on the market achieving U-Values of 0.8 when triple glazed or 1.2 when double glazed. Instead of the traditional 4 or 5 chambers found in a uPVC window frame, Residence 9 has – you guessed it, 9 chambers. This allows the Residence 9 to achieve one of the best energy ratings around especially when you include its modern spacer bar, made from composite material instead of the traditional metal.

Designed and made in the UK, Residence 9 is being accepted in conservation areas with its sympathetic and authentic timber-effect design. With superior acoustic, strength, security and most importantly thermal performance, the Residence 9 is the perfect way to improve not only your home's look but also its efficiency.

Roof Insulation

As heat rises, an uninsulated roof can mean up to a quarter of your home's heat can escape through the roof. Insulating your loft, attic or roof using mineral wool insulation can prevent heat leakage and reduce your heating bills.



With the average cost of roof insulation costing between £200-£400 depending on the size of the property, and with an average saving of between £100-£250 per year, it's a logical and cost-effective way to save money and save heat.

Cavity Wall Insulation

Cavity wall insulation is an important and necessary upgrade to improve the thermal performance of your home. The process fills the air space between the inner and outer wall with high-performing material to stop heat transfer. Especially in the winter, warm air will travel through the walls and escape outside, equating to around a third of all heat loss in uninsulated houses.

Cavity insulation is a viable option for slightly older homes built before the 1990s and can result in a saving of almost £300 per year.

Change your light bulbs

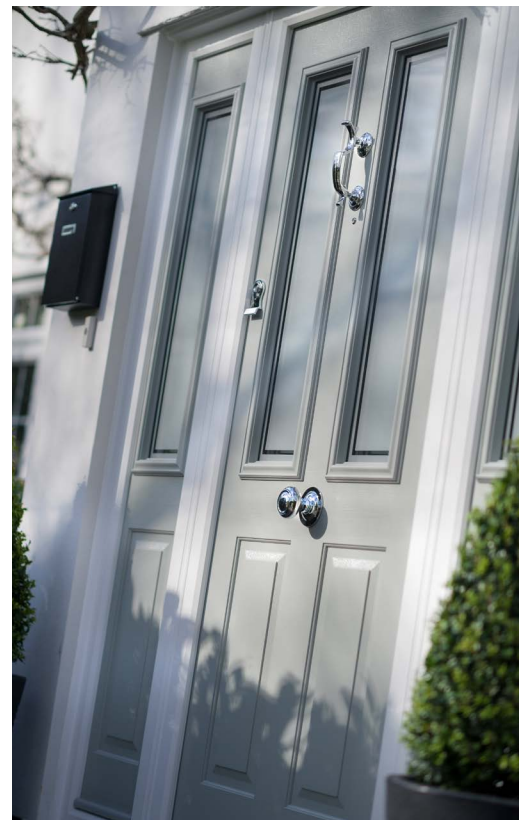
A simple change of light bulbs can be an effective way of reducing your household's electricity bill. Changing from traditional filament bulbs to more energy efficient LEDs or compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) can give you the same amount of light at a reduced cost.

Simply changing all halogen downlights for LEDs can save up to £35 per year.

Invest in an efficient door

On average a home loses 10% of its heat through the windows and doors, meaning your barricade from all the elements outside may not be as strong as you would hope. One remedy would be to invest in a composite door that boasts good thermal and security values.

Made with a waterproof glass reinforced plastic (GRP) skin and fitted with multi-point shootbolt and hook bolt locks with the option to upgrade to 'Secure by Design' police security standard specification, composite doors are not only secure but draught and water proof. Whatever tough weather comes, composite doors will keep the cold air, wind and rain out and will stop your warm air inside from escaping.



If you're looking for a way to bring more light into your house and create a feeling of space, bi-folding aluminium doors will be great investment. The high-quality doors offer expansive views and an opportunity to introduce more natural light into your home.

Drop your shower pressure

Whilst modern high-power showers are certainly luxurious and relaxing, they use a lot of water. Many power showers can use almost as much water as a bath, and could fill one after five minutes.

Reducing the pressure of your shower or using an energy efficient shower head that can replicate the same amount of power, will still allow you to have a nice, hot and soothing shower but without the hefty bill.

Skylights

With all the doom and gloom of winter setting in, the natural resolution is to turn the lights on in the home. However, installing a skylight can be a way to not only add an eye-catching element to your house but also the perfect opportunity to let more natural light in. The common misconception of skylights is they don't have great thermal performance. However, modern skylights using high-quality glass with Atlas aluminium or Ultraframe uPVC offer excellent thermal insulation performance.

With flat, pitched and pyramid skylights available in uPVC and premium aluminium, skylights can go above any room, foyer or hallway to open the space with natural light, add extra warmth and save resorting to the light bulb.

As well as coming in self-cleaning clear and blue glass, flat skylights are available with Satinovo privacy glass for use in bathrooms and private areas. Pitched skylights can be small enough to go above a stairwell or large enough to illuminate a whole dining room.



Solar Panels

Government grants and initiatives may be ending on solar panels but installation prices are dropping. Solar panels are a great way to take advantage of the sun's rays to in-turn power your household appliances and lighting.

Under the government's Feed-in Tariff scheme, UK homeowners can be paid for the energy they generate. Furthermore, energy suppliers will pay homeowners if they export excess energy back to the electricity grid. The Feed-in Tariff is being lowered every quarter so homeowners who are thinking of installing solar panels, should act sooner rather than later.

Abolish standby mode

It's common in many UK homes for everyone to leave for work or school in the morning leaving a sea of red standby lights behind them. For many it may seem frivolous but when you count the games consoles, televisions and many kitchen appliances on standby it can equate to a lot of power usage. Even phone and tablet chargers left plugged in consume power.

Turning off many electrical appliances at the plug won't upset their programming and can help to save up to £30 per year. It may be wise to invest in standby savers or timers to turn off multiple devices at once.

Thermostat reaching alternatives

It may seem silly but when people are feeling the cold they will instantly reach for the thermostat rather than a lovely warm jumper. Turning to jumpers, wearing socks and using your slippers instead of increasing the heat is the easiest way to reduce your energy bills and your home's energy usage. Don't forget an extra blanket on the bed this winter to keep you warm and toasty.

Just turning down your thermostat by one degree Celsius can result in saving of £60 per year. Another top tip to avoid reaching for the thermostat is use the heat from your oven after cooking a meal to heat your kitchen and surrounding rooms.

If you are looking to improve the energy efficiency of your home, speak to DWL, the experts in windows, doors, skylights and many other glazing products.

We have a wealth of knowledge in installing uPVC, aluminium and timber-effect windows and doors.

Email us at info@dwlwindows.co.uk or give us a ring on **01795 418 538** and speak to our dedicated team.