

# How would you feel if we said we could save you money?

**This guide is all about making your home as comfy as possible while using less energy and saving money (as well as a little bit of the planet).**

There are heaps of good things you can do to manage your energy. Many of them won't cost a cent and often it's the cheapest, easiest changes that will make the biggest difference to your power bills. So, whether you use energy to raise comfort levels while paying the same for energy, or to just save money on your energy bills, we can help you.

## Efficiency. Do you have room for improvement?

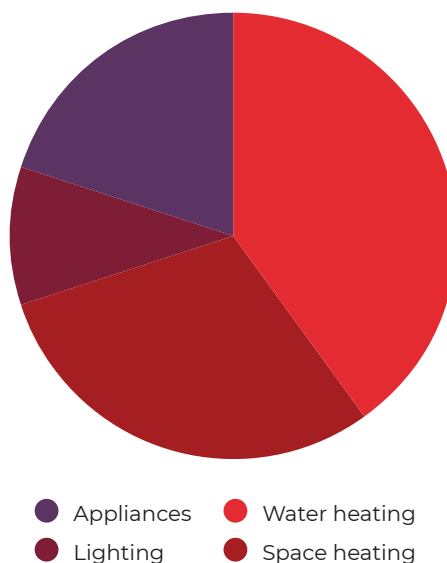
See how awesome you are by the amount of times you say 'yes'?

- Your hot water is 55°C at the tap.
- You shower rather than bathe.
- Your hot water cylinder is 'A' grade or has a cylinder wrap.
- Your hot water cylinder pipes are insulated.
- You don't have any overflowing hot water.
- Your showerheads are energy efficient.
- You have no dripping taps.
- You use cold water when washing clothes.
- You only boil a kettle with just what you need.
- Your ceiling insulation is at least 100 mm thick.
- You have under-floor insulation.
- You use 24-hour time switches and/or thermostats on your heaters.
- You have weather strips around doors and windows to stop draughts and heat loss.
- Your appliances are switched off at the wall (not left on standby all the time).
- You hardly ever use your clothes dryer.

## Power. But where does it all go?

A family of four's energy costs can be over \$1,800 or more a year. Up to 40% goes on water heating alone and up to another 30% on heating rooms. Out of all your appliances, your fridge and freezer are massive suckers of energy.

This pie-chart shows where your energy is being eaten up in a typical four-person household.



**Note: approximate breakdowns only.**

## Occasionally feeling ripped-off by your power bills?

There are lots of reasons why your energy bill might be higher than you expected. Here are just a few:

- The weather has changed? Sounds obvious but cold weather can increase your heating costs and so can hot weather if you use air-conditioning or fans.
- The number of people in your household has changed? A new baby, live-in relatives, boarders or guests – they can all sap your power.
- You've changed? Are you spending more time at home? Perhaps you've bought a spa or have teenagers taking longer showers (what do they do in there!)? Perhaps you've added new appliances, such as a heat pump, or just been using them more?
- You've made home renovations or extensions? You'll use more energy to heat your home during renovations, especially with the addition of any extra floor space and/or windows.
- Maybe there's a problem with one of your appliances? Perhaps your hot water cylinder or pipes are leaking; a faulty thermostat; or the fridge door seals are failing?
- Your bill covers a longer period than usual? Your energy usage may not be higher at all!



## Please, save your energy.

You can do lots of things around your home to save energy at little or no extra effort or cost.

### At no cost

#### Water heating

- Adjust the thermostat so that the water is at 55°C at the tap.
- Fix dripping taps.
- Take showers instead of baths.
- Use cold water when rinsing dishes or washing clothes.
- Switch off your hot water if you're on holiday for more than two weeks.

#### Heating

- Close the doors of rooms that are being heated.
- Close curtains just before it gets dark at night to keep in the heat.
- Turn off heaters in rooms you're not using.
- Block off unused chimneys and gaps under doors.
- Use the thermostat and timer on your heaters so they only come on when you need them.
- Capture as much sunlight as possible – keep windows clean and make sure trees don't obstruct the sun light.

#### Fridge and Freezer

- Avoid opening the fridge doors more than you need to – take all food out for a meal at once, and shut the doors straight away.
- Fridges work best when they're full (but not overloaded).
- Defrost your freezer regularly to reduce ice build-up.
- Keep food covered to reduce moisture build-up on the inside of the fridge. Wipe moisture from bottles and other containers before you put them back in the fridge.
- Use the most efficient temperature settings – set your freezer at -18°C and your fridge between 2°C and 5°C.
- Leave space around your fridge or freezer for air to circulate, and avoid placing them next to your oven or stove or in direct sunlight.

#### Cooking

- Defrost food naturally instead of using the microwave.
- Use a microwave or toaster instead of the oven or stovetop when you can.
- Avoid opening oven doors too often – each time you do, the temperature drops by up to 15°C.
- Use pots with well-fitting lids, and keep lids on the pots when you're cooking.
- Let food cool before putting it in the fridge or freezer.

#### Lighting

- Switch off any lights that are not needed, and take advantage of natural lighting wherever possible.
- Choose the appropriate strength of bulb for the area – for example, don't use a 100-watt bulb for a bedside lamp when a 40-watt bulb would be sufficient.
- Clean your lights and lampshades regularly to get the maximum light.
- Sounds daft but get your eyes tested regularly too!

#### Other

- When you're not using appliances, unplug them or switch them off at the wall. Even standby mode uses power.
- Wait until the dishwasher is full before you use it, and use the economy cycle.
- Use an electric blanket to heat your bed instead of a heater to warm the room.
- Shower with the windows open to avoid moisture forming – dry air is much faster to heat and is better for your health.
- Reduce the time you have the heated towel rail switched on.
- Don't overload your washing machine (although it's better to wash full loads than half loads).
- Use shorter wash cycles whenever you can.
- Only use a clothes dryer if it's essential.
- If you have to use the clothes dryer it's more efficient to dry a full load.
- Ventilate the clothes dryer to the outside.
- Clean the clothes dryer's lint filter after every use.

### At a small cost (but with big savings)

- Install a hot water cylinder wrap.
- Insulate hot water pipes coming out of your hot water cylinder.
- Fit a water-saving low-flow showerhead.
- Use energy-efficient light bulbs in high-use areas – they use 75% less energy than normal light bulbs.
- Weatherproof your house to minimise air leaks around doors and windows – use weather seals from a hardware store.
- Replace worn seals on your oven, fridge or freezer so hot or cold air doesn't escape.
- Paint walls a light colour to reflect more light.
- Use a ceiling fan to push warm air back into the room in winter (and cool air in summer).
- Have on/off sensors on your outside lights.

- If you're buying a new appliance, choose one with a high energy star rating – a wise choice can save you heaps of money.

### At a less small cost but with even bigger savings

- Buy a grade 'A' hot water cylinder.
- Install ceiling insulation – huge amounts of heat can be lost through an un-insulated ceiling.
- Install under-floor insulation.
- If your garage is attached to the house, insulate its walls and ceiling.
- When buying an oven, consider a fan-forced oven.
- Fit thermal-lined curtains and pelmets at the top of windows.
- Double-glaze your windows (do the high-use rooms first).

### Feeling better equipped to save loads on your energy bills?

For more information, contact the Electrical Contractors Association of New Zealand (ECANZ) on **0800 506 688**, or visit their website at **[ecanz.org.nz](http://ecanz.org.nz)**. ECANZ members provide electrical contractor services throughout New Zealand.