

Keeping Warm This Winter

As energy bills rise, do you feel nervous about turning up the thermostat at home? Well, take heart, because there are lots of things you can do to get a handle on the heating this winter - so read on and look after yourself.

Make yourself warmer

- Wear several thin layers, rather than one thick layer. This is because they trap warm air close to the body
- Go for clothes made from wool, cotton or fleecy fabrics, if possible
- Draw your curtains, as soon as it gets dark to stop the heat escaping and the draughts coming in
- Keep any windows and internal doors closed when it's cold – this will keep heat inside, where you most need it
- A lot of heat is lost through the head and neck, so if you're chilly indoors, try wearing a hat and scarf
- Your body keeps warm by burning food you've eaten, so make sure you have regular hot meals that contain carbs, such as potatoes, pasta, bread and rice. Try porridge with hot milk for breakfast and soups and stews for lunch and dinner.
- If you're sitting down, a shawl or blanket will provide extra warmth. You should also try to keep your feet up, because air is cooler at ground level.
- Wear warm clothes in bed. When it's really cold, wear thermal underwear, bed socks and even a hat.

Some longer-term things you can do to help ward off the winter chill

- Have your heating system serviced and chimney swept
- Check your water stopcock is working properly
- Get a keyhole cover – it should only cost a couple of pounds and will help keep the draughts out in cold weather.
- Fit thermal linings to your curtains if you can – this will also help to keep the heat in
- Check out the benefits and grants available to help with insulation and energy efficiency, such as cavity wall insulation

[Find out more about help you could get with heating costs »](#)

Other ways to keep the fuel bills down

- Turn off lights when you're not in the room
- Don't leave electrical items, like the TV and DVD player, on standby – switch them off.
- Only boil as much water in a kettle as you need.
- Use a 30°C programme on your washing machine
- Turn off any electrical chargers once your appliance is at full power, such as a laptop or mobile phone.
- Don't block your radiators – it cuts the heat they give out
- If you have a dishwasher, fill it fully before using it, so it's more energy efficient.

What to stock up on

If you can afford it, you'll feel more relaxed if you stock up for the winter months. Try to have a store of these, in case you have trouble getting out of the house.

- Batteries for your smoke alarm
- Salt or sand for icy steps and pathways
- Tinned fruit and veg – it's just as nutritious as the fresh kind
- Cold and flu medicines, as well as any repeat prescriptions
- Pasta and rice will last through the winter months, so stock up now.

[Download the Age UK Winter wrapped up guide for more help and advice »](#)