

Central heating controls

Making the most of your system



Decent central heating controls will help you heat your home more efficiently and lead to lower fuel bills. And you don't need to wait until you replace your boiler to get started.

Timer or programmer

The timer or programmer allows you to control when your heating and hot water comes on and when it goes off.

This is handy because it means you can programme your **central heating** to fit around the way your home is used. If you're not at home or are in bed asleep, then the heating doesn't need to be on. The trick is to set your heating to come on half an hour before you get home or get up, and set it to switch off half an hour before you no longer need it. This is because an average home takes around 30mins to heat up when the heating comes on and 30mins to cool down when it goes off.

So, say you get up at 7.30am, leave for work at 8.30am and get home at 6.00pm. It would make sense to set the heating to turn on at 7:00am, off at 8.00am and on again at 5.30pm. In the evenings you should set the heating to turn off half an hour before you go to bed.

Your programmer may also have the option of setting different on/off times at the weekend, or even more than two cycles during the day.

What do the different settings on my central heating controls mean?

'Auto' means the heating will go on and off during the day at the times it has been programmed to do so.

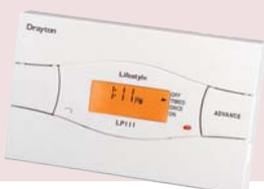
'24hrs' or 'On' means the heating stays on all the time.

'Off' means the heating will remain off all the time.

'All day', means the heating will switch on at the first 'on' setting you have programmed and then remain on until the last 'off' setting of the day.

'Boost' or '+1hr' switches the heating on for a one hour 'boost' of heat.

'Advance' moves the programmer to the next 'on' or 'off' setting in the daily cycle.



Radiator valves put you in control and save money

Setting the **hot water** timing depends on the type of boiler you have. If you have a hot-water tank the water in the tank will need to be heated up periodically during the course of the day. The amount of times the water needs to be heated up depends on how big and how well insulated the hot-water tank is, and how much water your household uses. If you have a hot water tank, the thermostat on it should be set to 60-65°C: hot enough to kill bacteria. If you find this too hot, mixer taps can help.

Room thermostat

A room thermostat is usually found in a hallway or sitting room. Its job is to monitor the temperature in the house and send a signal to the boiler telling it to switch off when the house is warm enough. Thermostats are normally set between 18 and 21°C. This is a comfortable temperature for most people, and warm enough to minimise the risk of 'flu and other 'winter' illness. Some people need to keep their home warmer due to their age or health problems.



Thermostatic radiator valves

Thermostatic Radiator Valves or TRVs (see photo above) allow you to control the temperature of a room by regulating the flow of water through the radiator. If, for example, during the day you spend most of the time downstairs you could set the TRVs on the downstairs radiators to medium or high, whilst leaving the upstairs radiators low, or even turning them off altogether.

Turn your room thermostat down by 1°C. You'll barely notice the difference in temperature, but you could cut your heating bills by around £55 a year.



Tips for lower energy bills

Happy paying your electricity and gas supplier more money than you need to? Thought not. Here are 10 ways to cut your bills ...

1) 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.



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



3) 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.

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



5) Buying a new washing machine, TV or dishwasher? Look out for the Energy Saving Trust logo.

6) Don't over-fill the kettle (but do make sure you cover the metal element at the base).



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) 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.

9) Wait 'til you have a full load before doing a wash. Two half-loads use more energy (and water) than one full load.

10) Sleep tight. Make sure all the lights are turned off when you go to bed. If you want to light a child's room or a landing, use a low-wattage night light.



This leaflet is one of a series that covers a range of energy efficiency and renewable energy topics, produced by the Sustainable Energy Across the Common Space (SEACS) project, for you to view online or download to share in your community.

SEACS brought together three UK and two French local authorities – Devon County Council, Dorset County Council, Wiltshire Council, le Conseil Général des Côtes d'Armor and Lannion-Trégor Agglomération – to tackle the energy challenge that is faced on both sides of the channel.

The aim was to create opportunities for individuals, households, communities, schools and local authority buildings in both UK and France to reduce their energy consumption, implement energy efficiency measures and use clean/renewable energy where possible. The project has raised awareness of climate and energy issues and encouraged long term behavioural change towards energy use. Cooperation was the ethos of the project and participants had the opportunity to exchange and learn from each other.

For further information about SEACS project, to get ideas and view case studies to help you and your community save energy, and to find out which schools and community groups in your area have been involved, visit the SEACS website or the energy pages of your local authority's website.

www.seacs.info

www.wiltshire.gov.uk/sustainability

www.dorsetforyou.com/climatechange

www.devon.gov.uk/energy

This leaflet was first produced by the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) and reprinted in this version on behalf of SEACS.

CSE's 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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We are a national charity that helps people change the way they think and act on energy