

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 £45
Payback time	12 years
DIY cost	£100 to £350 **
DIY payback time	3 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 £175 a year. If you have 100mm then the saving is around £25 a year.

* Subsidies for loft insulation will no longer available when the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) ends in 2012, but financing options for energy efficiency improvements like loft insulation will be available under the forthcoming 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 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.



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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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- Facebook: www.facebook.com/EnergySavingAdvice
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Founded 1979

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