

# Working from home?

**ENERGY PROJECTS PLUS**  
towards a sustainable future

Over the past few years there's been a massive increase of people working "office jobs" from their homes. But this needn't lead to a massive increase in our home energy bills. Here are some tips to help keep the bills in check.



## DRESS FOR THE WEATHER

This is always one of our Top Tips anyway, but it's something that's definitely on-trend for working from home.

Got no Teams/Zoom meetings today? Then nobody will know you're wrapped up in your favourite lounge pants, dressing gown and fluffy slippers. And let's face it – your fluffy slippers should pass muster even if your upper-half has to deliver an online presentation.

## Cover your ankles

This might sound like a fashion tip from the 1920s, not an energy-saving tip from the 2020s, but if your feet feel cold, all of you feels cold, and that might tempt you to boost the heating. So be sure you've got some winter-proof socks/slippers handy.

## Embrace thermals

It's unlikely we'll be able to make thermal underwear cool, but that's fine as they're invisible and help keep us nice and warm. This is a particularly worthwhile purchase if you do find your webcam on a lot.

## Beware "mouse hand"

While this isn't (yet) an officially-recognised medical condition, there is plenty of medical science confirming the further away from our core body heat our extremities are, the colder they can feel. So the hand that spends all its time sat on a mouse can become painfully cold. A woolly mitten might be too cumbersome, but a fingerless glove should hopefully help trap some heat.

## HEAT THE WORKSTATION, NOT THE HOME

We will always recommend that as much of your home should be heated as much as possible, to prevent any 'cold spots' emerging, that can attract condensation, causing mould.

However, if you'd usually be out at work with the heating off, there's no need to double your heating bill just because you're working from home. Here are some ideas to help avoid switching on the main heating system:

### Hot water bottle

Solutions to high energy bills needn't be revolutionary or high-tech. Simply filling a hot water bottle to rest of your lap could mean the difference between switching on your main heating or not.

### Warm drinks and meals

Autumn/Winter is the time for hot chocolate, and delicious stews bubbling away in the slow cooker. Make the most of the season and warm your insides this way. Coffee and tea are other obvious choices, but some cordials are delicious with hot water too, e.g. blackcurrant.



### Electric heating

Oil-filled radiators are our favourite auxiliary heating appliances. Available from lots of hardware and general appliance shops, with prices starting from £40, these can provide warmth right next to where you're sitting.

Some of the more expensive ones come with thermostats and timers, so can be controlled just like your central heating. But crucially, they only need to be on for a short while to make your workstation warm enough for the radiator to be switched off again. This can save you a bundle, compared to switching on the central heating for the whole home.



## CENTRAL HEATING CONTROLS

If you really do have to switch on the central heating, then check all your central heating controls to make sure you're not overheating and overpaying

### Boiler Thermostat

60°C should be hot enough for your radiators to be too hot to touch.

### Hot Water Thermostat

If you have a separate hot water tank, this again only need be set to 60°C, which is hot enough to kill legionella.

### Programmer

We recommend you use a programmer anyway, so you awake into a warm home, and the heating switches off at least half an hour before you go to bed. If you find the property needs extra heat during the day, programme it to switch on for a few hours over lunchtime, or use your "boost" function, so you don't accidentally leave the heating on all day.



### Room Thermostat

We recommend 18°C-21°C as a comfortable temperature for healthy adults. If you have a baby, or an elderly person in the house, or if anybody is ill, injured, or has mobility problems, then we recommend 21°C-23°C. You can save £100 for each degree you turn down your thermostat, and if you feel warm and well, you can turn it down as low as 16°C to save money. Any lower can be dangerous to your health.

### Thermostatic Radiator Valves

If you're working out of one room, the whole house doesn't need to be kept warm. Turn down the radiators in all other rooms, and turn them back up before the evening heating schedule.

## ENERGY EFFICIENT HOME IMPROVEMENTS

### Easy Measures

These are items that can be picked up at most of the larger hardware stores, and fitted on a DIY basis. These include LED bulbs (especially if you have any filament or halogen bulbs), draught-proofing, and radiator reflector panels. They are all relatively low-cost, and will pay for themselves by helping you reduce your energy costs.

### Larger Measures

Thanks to the UK target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050, there has been an increase in grants and schemes to support residents to adopt "larger measures," including:

### Boiler Upgrade Scheme

If your boiler is old and inefficient, and your home is well insulated, a heat pump might be a great way to heat your home. This scheme provides £7,500 towards the cost of installation.

### ECO4 & ECO4 Flex

Homes can be insulated, heating systems upgraded, and solar panels installed, free of charge, if your property has an energy efficiency rating of D-G, and you're either (a) in receipt of means-tested benefits, or (b) have a household income below £31,000, or (c) living in a deprived neighbourhood and vulnerable to living in the cold, or (d) have a chronic health condition made worse by cold.

### Great British Insulation Scheme

If you're not eligible for ECO4, but live in a property with an EPC rating of D-G and are in Council Tax band A-D, you can receive a grant towards the installation of one insulation measure.

### Home Upgrade Grant

If you don't use mains gas for heating, and your Local Authority is taking part in the scheme, you could receive up to £25,000 worth of energy efficient works.

### Solar Together

This isn't a grant, but a bulk buying club. For more information, or to sign up, visit [www.solartogether.co.uk](http://www.solartogether.co.uk)

For further information  
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