

KEEP THOSE POWER BILLS DOWN!

We're all feeling the chill at this time of year, and now's a good time to look at power use in your home – small changes can make a big difference to your power bill!

10 TIPS FOR REDUCING YOUR POWER BILL

- 1 Ensure you're on the right electricity plan. If you're using less than 8000kw of power a year, it's cheaper to be on a low user plan. Use tools such as whatsmynumber.org.nz to check you're getting the best deal.
- 2 Switching off your old second fridge could save up to \$300 annually.
- 3 Use the free energy from the sun to dry clothes on an outside line, instead of in an electric dryer. You could save around \$200 annually (and it costs nothing to do this).
- 4 Run your heat pump on the most effective settings and clean the filter regularly to ensure it runs properly.
- 5 Change to energy saving light bulbs. A change of just eight energy saving bulbs equates to \$150 savings per year.
- 6 Check your shower usage. If the water from it fills a bucket in less than a minute you could save around \$150 annually by changing to an efficient showerhead. Keep your showers short – in a household of three, each extra minute of shower time costs about \$80 annually.
- 7 Turning off appliances left on standby saves around \$125 annually.
- 8 Washing your clothes in cold water rather than warm water could save \$65 annually.
- 9 Stop heat escaping, and draughts, with DIY double glazing and good thick curtains.
- 10 When buying appliances, use the EECA 'Rightware' tool to compare products and find the most efficient model for your needs.

FIRE NEEDS AIR!

If you're keeping your home warm using a wood burner, you can get a better result (more heat for less wood) if you make sure your fire has good air flow.

Shutting the fire damper down is like breathing through a straw – hard work! Getting the balance of air right is important. Aim for a good hot fire, and regulate the heat output by adjusting the amount of wood you put on rather than shutting the air flow off.

OTHER GREAT TIPS FOR YOUR WINTER BURNING:

- Burn wood that is less than 110mm in diameter.
- Use the right wood at the right time – lighter wood (often called 'softwood') like pine is good for making kindling and getting a fire started. Once the fire is well established, denser wood (hardwood) will burn for longer and give more heat. If you can, use wood from plantation forests (for example pine and gum) rather than native woods like Manuka.

- Keep the air setting high enough for a clean burn – too little air produces smoke rather than heat.
- Don't burn chemically treated or salt impregnated wood like driftwood – they can corrode your wood burner and flue, emit toxic gases and leave toxic residues in the ash and flue.

(Source – energywise.govt.nz)

Learn how to light a fire cleanly and efficiently with a helpful video from the New Zealand Home Heating Association at nelson.govt.nz/burn-smoke-free.



nelson.govt.nz/burn-smoke-free

TOP TIP

If you need to buy more wood for burning this year, you'll have to make sure it has a moisture content of less than 25%. Make sure your wood supplier knows that the wood is for burning now. You can ask your wood supplier to show you the moisture content using a moisture meter, and to guarantee that it is fit for purpose.

HOW TO LIGHT YOUR FIRE

- 1  Leave a thin bed of ash in the bottom of the firebox
- 2  Use lots of well crunched up newspaper as a base
- 3  Place a good number of small pieces of dry, split kindling on top of the paper
- 4  Wait until the kindling is burning well before adding more wood
- 5  Don't damp the fire down until it is burning well
- 6  Go outside and check your chimney – you should see a heat haze but no smoke