



## Saving on gas bills

### Tips for households

Gas bills are a part of life for many Western Australian households. There are a number of ways you can monitor and reduce your gas use to keep on top of them.

You may have all or only some of the gas appliances that are looked at here, but even if you have an electrical version of the appliance, taking the same steps will help with your power bill too.

### **QUICK TIPS – FREE TO DO!**

#### **Take shorter showers**

Save money on water and gas by limiting your showers to 3 minutes. Heating water can be a major contributor to your gas usage so cutting back a few minutes or turning on a little more cold can save you big time.

#### **Use a lid**

Use lids on pots to trap the heat and cut back on cooking time. Cooking more and having leftover meals for the next day can also reduce the amount of gas your stove or BBQ uses.

#### **Use the sun to warm your home**

Open curtains and blinds when the sun is shining into your home in the cooler months. The sunlight can naturally warm your walls, floors and furniture which will hold on to the heat and reduce the amount of artificial heating you need. Remember to close the window shades when the sun moves away to stop the windows letting the heat out of the room.

#### **Dress for the weather**

Put on a jumper before turning on the heater.

#### **Turn heating off while you sleep**

Choose heavy or multiple blankets to keep you warm while you sleep. Once your body heat has warmed the covers, heating the air in the room can be unnecessary, so switch your heater off before you go to bed.

### **SEE IT ALL ADD UP!**

Your gas bills only come around every two or three months, so it can be some time before you see the difference on your bill. Don't be disheartened if the first bill you get hasn't moved much. Also remember that energy bills often fluctuate over the year, so comparing to the same time the year before could help you see the savings you are making.



## **KEEN TO DO MORE?**

There are lots of different ways that we can reduce gas use and save money. Some take a bit longer or have up-front costs but can make a huge difference to your bill.

### **Review your gas use**

Take the time to understand how much gas you use and when you use it.

Make a note of the different appliances that you have that use gas. Your oven, stove, hot water unit, BBQ and heaters are all common gas appliances that you may have.

Compare your bills to understand what time of year you are using the most gas and consider why that may be. Which appliances do you use more in winter or summer? Are you using gas in your hot water system that you didn't notice you were using?

### **Upgrade Appliances**

Once you understand the different gas appliances in your home and how you use them, consider their efficiency compared to more modern appliances.

It is important to check that your appliances are in good condition – particularly if devices such as heaters have been in storage. Any appliance that is cracked, broken or has frayed cords should be discarded.

If you are considering an upgrade, compare the gas use of your devices you are considering. Most gas appliances will come with a comparative energy consumption star rating. Choosing more efficient appliances may have a greater up-front cost but have the potential to reduce your energy use over their lifetime.

### **Check out your oven**

Check that the seal on your oven is in good condition, and replace it if it has tears or holes. Keeping the oven door closed while you are cooking traps in the hot air, allowing it to run at a lower cost as it doesn't need to keep heating more air.

### **Reduce hot water use**

If your hot water system uses gas, the following tips can help lower your bill by reducing the amount of water that the system heats.

#### ***Fill up your cleaning devices***

Only run the dishwasher or washing machine when they are full.

#### ***Switch to cold water***

Where possible, use a cold-water connection for your washing appliances and run cold wash cycles to reduce your energy consumption.

#### ***Look for water efficiencies***

Install low-flow showerheads and repair leaking taps. Turn your flick-mixer all the way to the cold setting when you only want cold water – turning the mixer on from the middle draws from your hot water system, increasing your gas use.

### **Solar hot water systems**

Solar hot water systems can be installed with instant gas back up (for when the sun isn't shining). While they may have a higher up-front cost, they can save you money on your regular gas bills.



## **Manage your heating**

Gas appliances are often used for keeping our houses warm when the cold sets in. If you have already tried using sunlight and an extra jumper for warmth, there are a few extra tips for keeping on top of your gas heating costs.

With all of these tips, bear in mind that living in a cold house can have negative impacts on your health. Find settings that work for you, remembering that 18°C is the recommended safe temperature for cold and temperate climates such as the south west of WA.

### ***Lock in your temperature settings***

Set your heaters for 18°C. This can be comfortable for most people in winter, but if its not, try up to 20°C. Every extra degree adds to the cost of heating the space.

### ***Use the ceiling fan to keep you warm***

Turn your ceiling fan over to the winter setting. The fan blades will push the hot air that rises to the ceiling down, keeping you warmer. Be careful not to have it on too fast as it may get a bit draughty.

### ***Keep your heaters free of obstructions***

Locate heaters in an open space to allow better circulation of the heat they produce. Avoid placing obstructions like an indoor clothes line close to the heater. Not only is that a fire risk, but it also makes the heater less efficient by blocking air flow.

### ***Use zones***

Close doors to rooms that are not in use to reduce the amount of air that is being made warmer.

### ***Draught proof doors and windows***

Cold air movement is often what makes us uncomfortable in winter, so track down any cold air streams and tightly close windows and doors, or use draught stops to block any air leaking around them.

### ***Insulate***

Get professional help in checking what parts of your home you could insulate (or upgrade the insulation). Insulation in ceilings and timber floors can often be upgraded and can make a big difference on how comfortable your house is – in both summer and winter.

## **CHECK YOU ARE GETTING THE BEST DEAL**

There are a number of gas retailers who operate in the main gas network in WA, giving most customers choice around who they use to supply their gas.

Retailers often offer discounts on usage charges if you sign up with them for a period of time or if you pay by direct debit.

Shop around and ask for the best deal that suits your circumstances.

## **Share your experience**

Let your friends know about what you've been doing and share the savings!

For more information contact:

### **Energy Policy WA**

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