



FIND MONEY IN WEIRD PLACES

Easy ways to save up to \$500 on your power bill

consumer.



Warmer
Kiwi
Homes

Winter is the time of shorter days, colder nights and higher power bills. But did you know that with a few easy steps, you can save around \$500* on your bills across the year?

Consumer NZ and Warmer Kiwi Homes have teamed up to bring you some simple tips and tricks to help make your home a warmer, healthier place for you and your whānau. Our advice won't take much time or effort and importantly most won't even cost you a thing. The average household can save up to **\$500** a year simply by making some of these small changes.

*To learn more about how this figure is calculated, visit consumer.org.nz/evidence-document.

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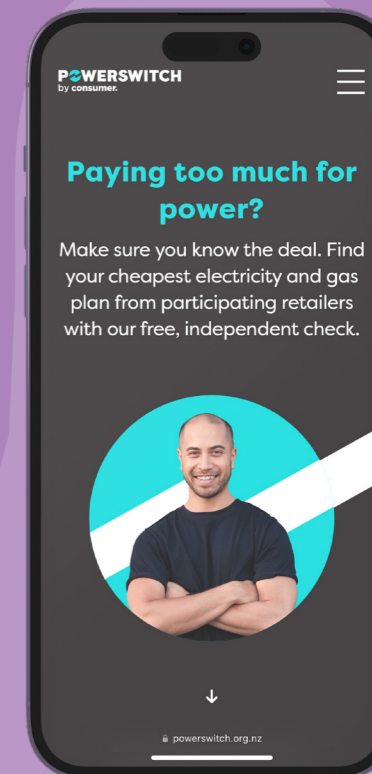
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CHECK YOUR POWER PLAN

You might be surprised how much money you can save by simply changing your power plan or company. Households can typically save between **\$300** and **\$400** per year when they change plan. Not bad for 10 minutes work!

Powerswitch



You can use the Powerswitch website to do a free and independent check of your power plan. It can help you easily compare thousands of power plans by answering a few simple questions. It also allows you to enter your power bill details if you want to do a really accurate comparison, but for most households this is not necessary. The Powerswitch calculator works by using the answers you provide to work out an estimated **annual cost** of all the plans available in your area.

How to find your cheapest plan

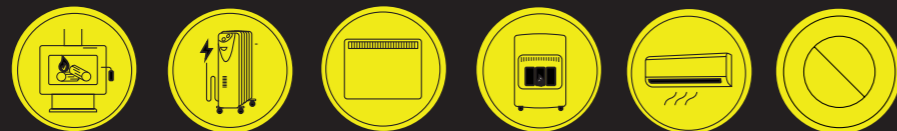
Go to www.powerswitch.org.nz and enter a few quick details:

How many people live in your home?



1-2 people 3-4 people 5+ people

How do you heat your home?



Wood burner Electric heater Night store heater LPG heater Heat pump None of these

How do you heat your water?



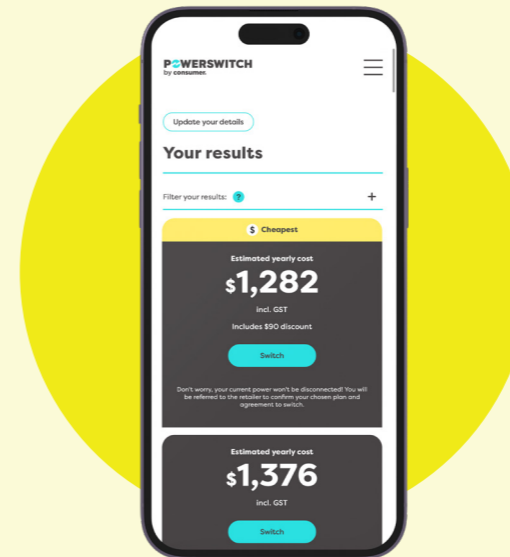
Electric hot water cylinder Electric continuous hot water Hot water heat pump Wetback Solar hot water None of these

What part of your home is insulated?



Floor Wall Ceiling Don't know / none

Need help? We get it – power and power bills can sometimes be complicated. If you're having trouble, help is at hand! Please email us at feedback@powerswitch.org.nz or give us a call on **0800 266 786** between 8:30am and 4:30pm.



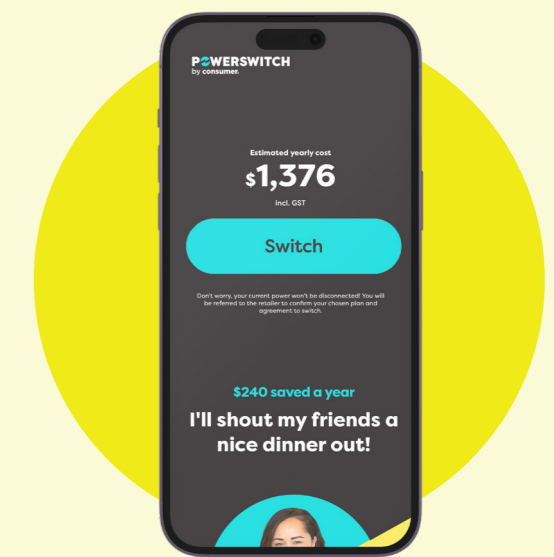
Compare your results

Once you've entered these details, your available plans will be displayed ranked from the cheapest to the most expensive. There are some things you'll need to consider in order to make sure that the plan you choose is suitable for your home.

Some plans require that:

- You have a smart meter at your house
- You commit to the plan for 12 to 24 months
- You agree to pricing that changes every half-hour and can rise and fall quite dramatically
- You only pay online.

Already on the cheapest plan? That's awesome! Power prices do change all the time though, so it pays to check Powerswitch at least once a year to make sure you're not paying too much.



How to switch

People are often surprised just how easy switching power providers really is.

1

Choose the best plan for you from your results page

2

Click on the "switch" button – don't worry, this does not mean you have automatically changed plan yet and your power will not be cut off during this process!

3

The power company you have chosen will either contact you (via phone or email) to talk you through their offer, or invite you to sign up online.

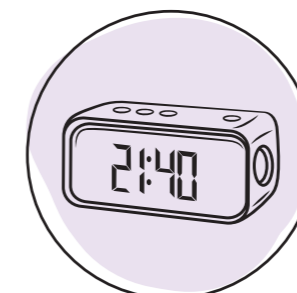
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The switch will only take place once you have agreed to your new plan.

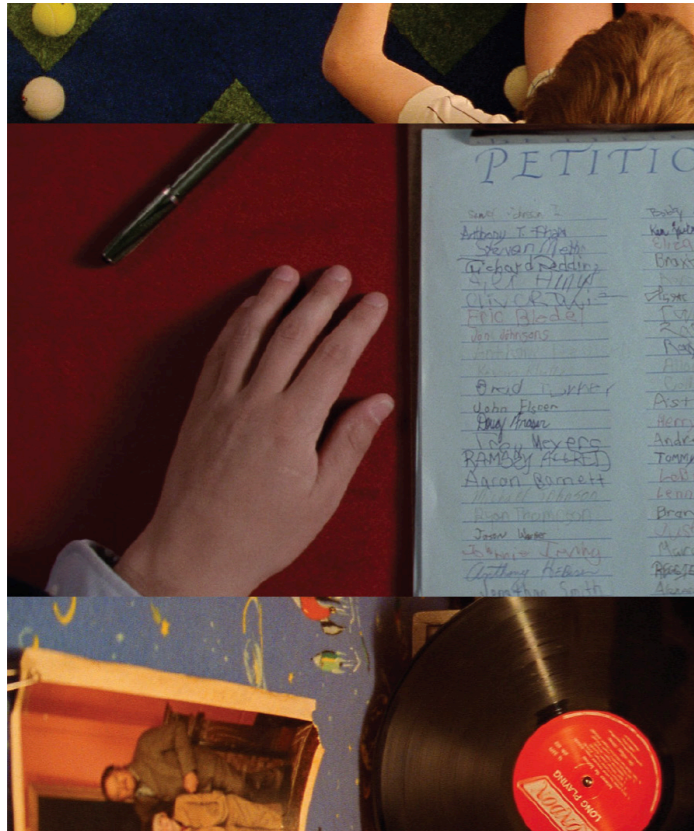
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The power company you have chosen will manage the entire switching process, including informing your old company.

TIP



Free "hour of power" deals and low off-peak rates can be great, but only if you are able to shift some of your household power usage to take advantage of them. Check the specifics of a plan you're interested in by clicking on the plus sign next to "Plan details".



KEEP HEAT IN AND MOISTURE OUT

Even if you had the flashiest house and the best heaters, you'd still need to keep the air inside your home healthy. Your activities throughout the day lead to moisture building up in the air. Damp air is not only harder to heat, it also allows mould to grow.

Keep the air dry

Where does the moisture come from?



Clothes drying
5.0L per load



Cooking
3.0L per day



Showers and baths
1.5L per day (per person)



Dishes
1.0L per day



Clothes washing
0.5L per day

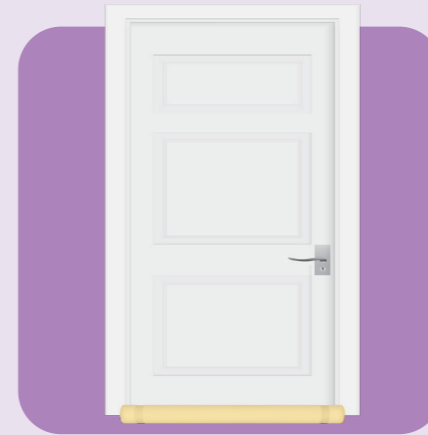


Breathing
0.2L per hour (per person)

What can you do? Luckily, it's pretty easy to manage. Fling the windows open for at least 10 minutes each day to help the house breathe out all that damp, stale air. Better yet, if you have secure window stays, leave the windows cracked during daylight hours when you're not using any heating to ensure that you have nice fresh air coming in. The big bad wolf here is drying clothes inside. If you can do it outside, that's your best bet.

Stop the heat from escaping

Getting rid of damp air in your home is only part of the solution. You also need to make sure you aren't letting warm air escape too.



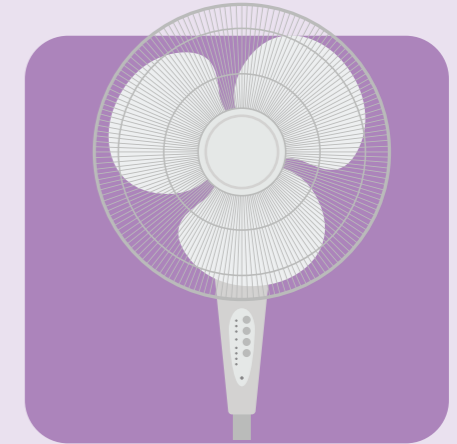
Draughts

Draughts make you feel chilly and mean you spend more money on trying to stay warm. Often they come from around windows and doors and cat flaps. You can make your own "draught snake" with a rolled-up towel or blanket that'll block the cold air – though maybe leave the cat flap free!



Curtains & window coverings

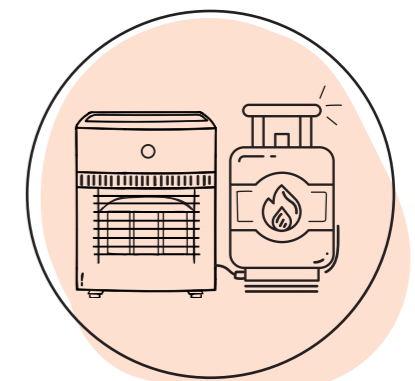
A lot of the heat from your home will disappear out the windows on cold nights if you don't have window coverings – either curtains or blinds. It's best to close them as soon as the sun goes down to capture as much heat as possible. If you don't have window coverings, or if your curtains have seen better days, your local curtain bank might be able to sort you out with some new ones for free.



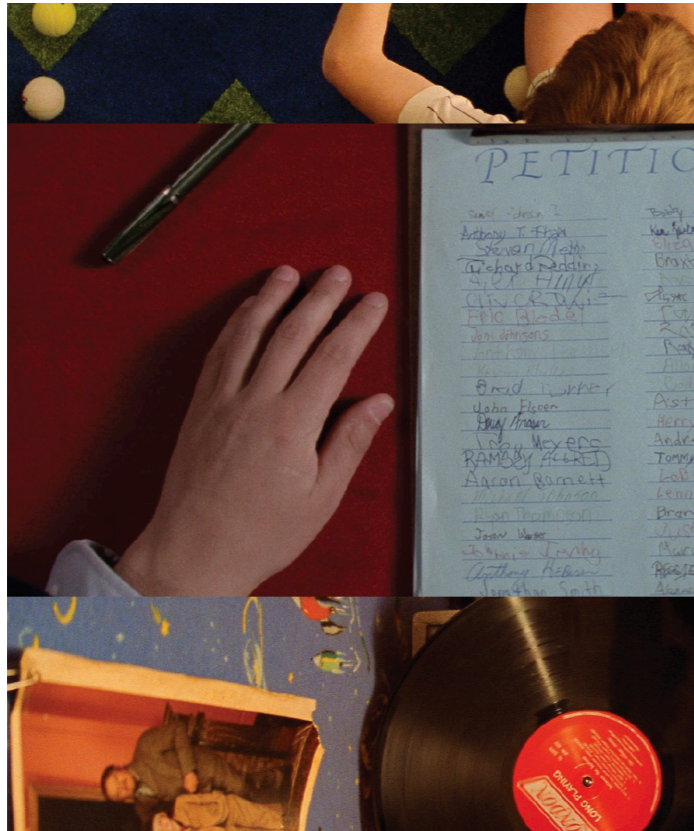
Use a fan

When you heat a room, the heat rises to the ceiling and eventually works its way out of the house. If you have a spare fan, plug it in and put it on a low setting. It'll spread the heat evenly throughout the room, and your heater won't have to work as hard. In fact, it'll save you money!

TIP



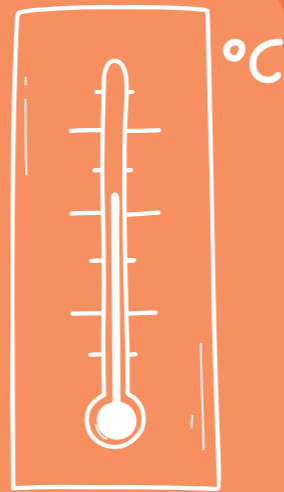
Avoid gas heaters like this. These heaters are downright nasty as they fill the air with dangerous gasses; they also make the air damp at the same time. If you have to use one in the depths of winter, make sure the windows are opened a crack – but your safest option is to use an electric heater instead.



GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR HEAT PUMP

The heat pump is the king of keeping you warm over winter. They're so efficient that they put out more heat than the power they consume. However, you need to use them properly to make sure they're working at their best.

Warmer Kiwi Homes



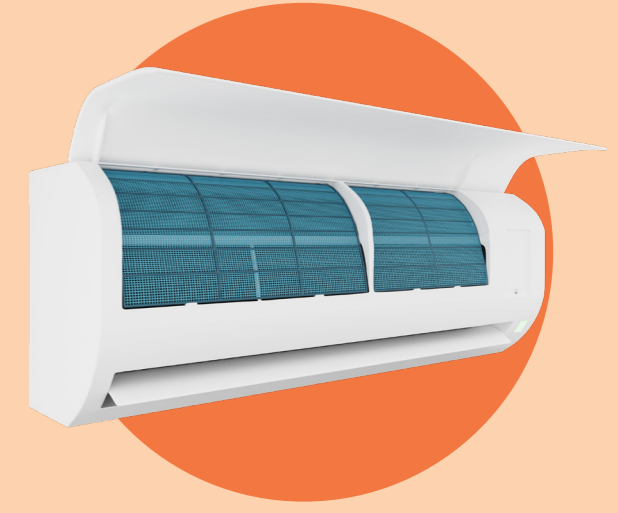
Warmer Kiwi Homes is a programme offering insulation and heater grants (capped at \$3000) to low-income homeowners. If you own your own home, it was built before 2008 and you have a Community Services Card or live in a low-income area, you may be eligible for a subsidy for installing a heat pump, insulation, wood burner or pellet burner. If this sounds like you, search "Warmer Kiwi Homes" or call 0800 749 782 and answer a few quick questions to check if you're eligible. Conditions apply.



Setting the temperature

Heat pumps work best when set between 19 and 21 degrees. If it's cold out, you don't need to crank the heat pump to 30 degrees to make it work faster. High temperature settings use a lot of power and lead to an eye-watering power bill.

To get the most out of your heat pump, change the mode on the controller so it's on heat – click "mode" until the little sun icon shows on the screen. From there, set the temperature between 19 and 21 degrees. Doing this can save you \$320 a year.



Filter

Heat pumps have removeable filters that you can see when you open the cover. Over time, they get clogged up with dust which stops the air from flowing. The heat pump then has to work harder to make up for the loss in air flow and will use more and more power.

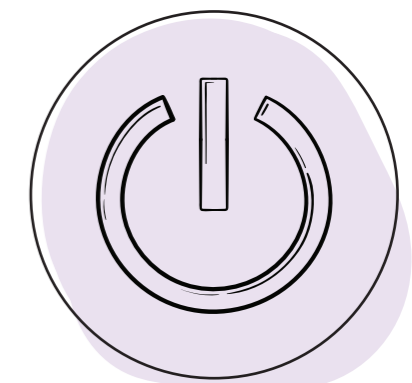
It's an easy fix though and will only take a couple of minutes – take out the filters and give them a gentle vacuum. You'll notice an immediate difference if they're really dirty and the room will instantly feel warmer. Make sure you do this job every couple of months.

TIP

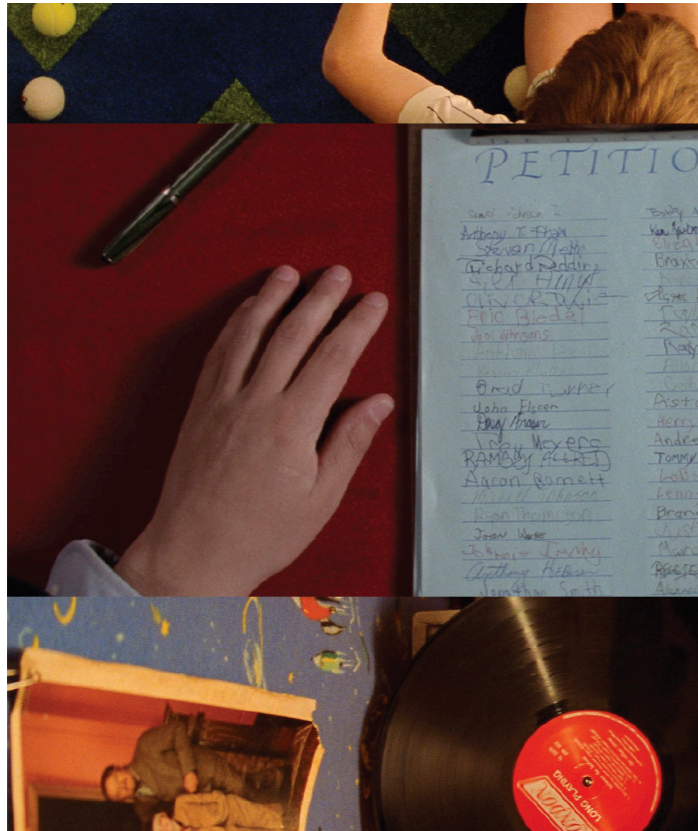


If it's truly cold out, don't put the temperature up – just turn up the heat pump's fan settings instead.

TIP



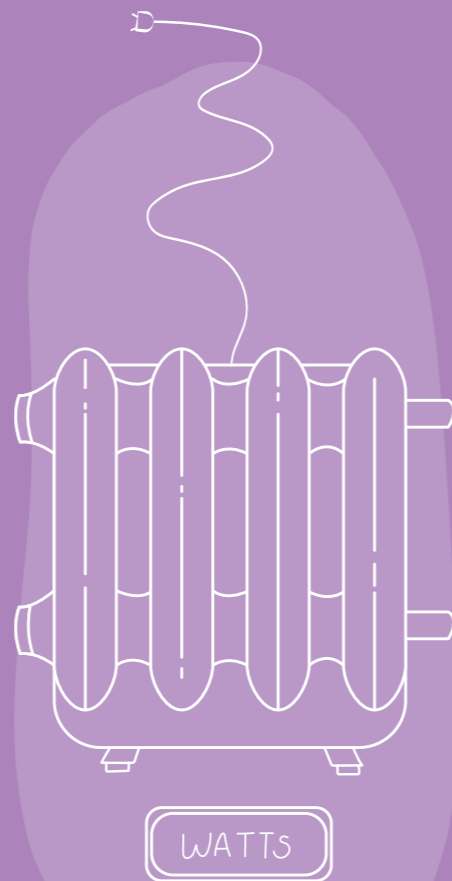
Lots of people think that it's more efficient to keep your heat pump running all the time. This is incorrect – make sure you turn your heat pump off overnight and when you leave the house.



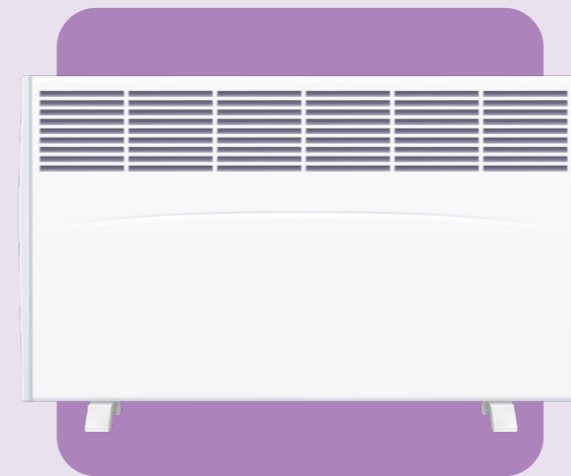
USE THE RIGHT HEATER IN THE RIGHT ROOM

While a heat pump may make the lounge feel cosy, they will struggle to keep the whole house warm – and not all of us have them. To keep the chill at bay in bedrooms and other areas, most of us turn to plug-in heaters. Different types of plug-in heaters typically all cost the same to run – around 50¢ an hour. However, they don't all deliver heat in the same way and some are better suited to certain rooms over others.

What size do you need?

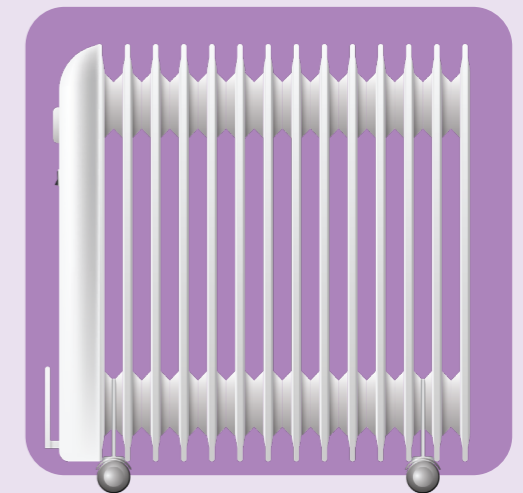


Most of the heaters you come across will be either 2000W or 2400W. These are big enough to heat a small, closed off living area or large bedroom. Anything smaller than that is better suited to kids' bedrooms – a heater that's 1000W or below will probably just take the edge off the cold, rather than keep the room warm. If you're not sure what size you currently have, you can check next to where the power cord comes out of your heater – it'll tell you there.



Living areas

Tower heaters with fans work well in larger spaces like living areas as they spread the heat faster. Panel heaters can work well as they're nice and flat and can be tucked back out of the way, and they're very quiet.



Bedrooms

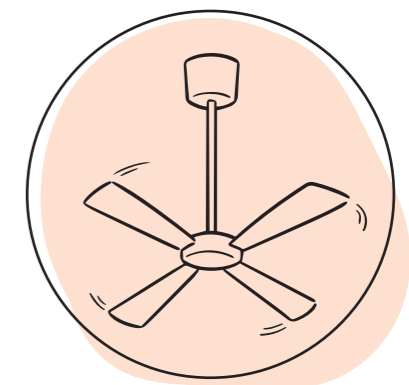
Keeping bedrooms warm is essential to keeping your family healthy over winter. Oil column heaters are your best bet in here. They are quiet, deliver a gentler heat and are well suited to smaller spaces.



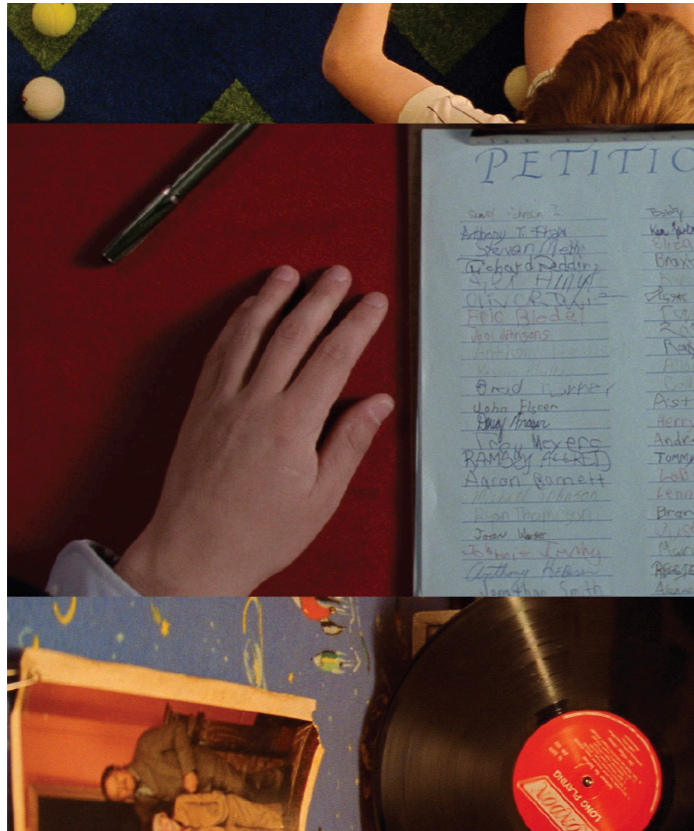
Just keeping you warm

Some houses are so hard to heat that you can struggle to make a room feel warm. In this case, your best bet is to have a small personal fan or radiant bar heater pointing directly at you. That will warm you up really quickly, but remember that others will still feel the chill.

TIP



If you have a spare plug-in fan or a ceiling fan, use it alongside an electric heater. It helps to spread the heat around the room so the heater doesn't need to work as hard and will actually save you power at the same time.



KNOW YOUR POWER HUNGRY APPLIANCES

Most of our homes are full of appliances, but do you know which ones are consuming the most power? Understanding which are the most power-hungry, and making some small changes in the way you actually use these appliances, can also add up to big savings in the colder months.



Switch off

Most of the things that you have plugged in at home use power all the time, even when they're not switched on. Switching off these appliances at the wall when not in use can save up to **\$100** on your power bill over the course of a year.



Oven

Cooking a large meal in the oven for the whole whānau will cost about **\$1** each time. You can save even more by getting the slow cooker out instead; it'll cost about **35c** a meal and you can use cheaper cuts of meat – win-win!



Drying clothes

A regular vented clothes dryer costs about **\$1** per load. It might be your only option during wet, cold weeks but take advantage of drying clothes outside as much as possible – it's free after all.



Lights

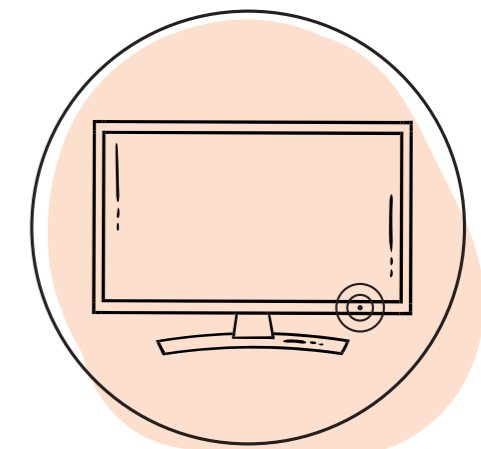
An old 100W lightbulb will cost you about **20c** each evening to run. This all adds up, so be sure to turn lights off when you're not in the room. If you can get your hands on them, opt for LED lightbulbs as they'll pay for themselves in power savings very quickly – the 100W equivalent LED bulb will only cost **3c** over an evening which could save you **\$62** a year..



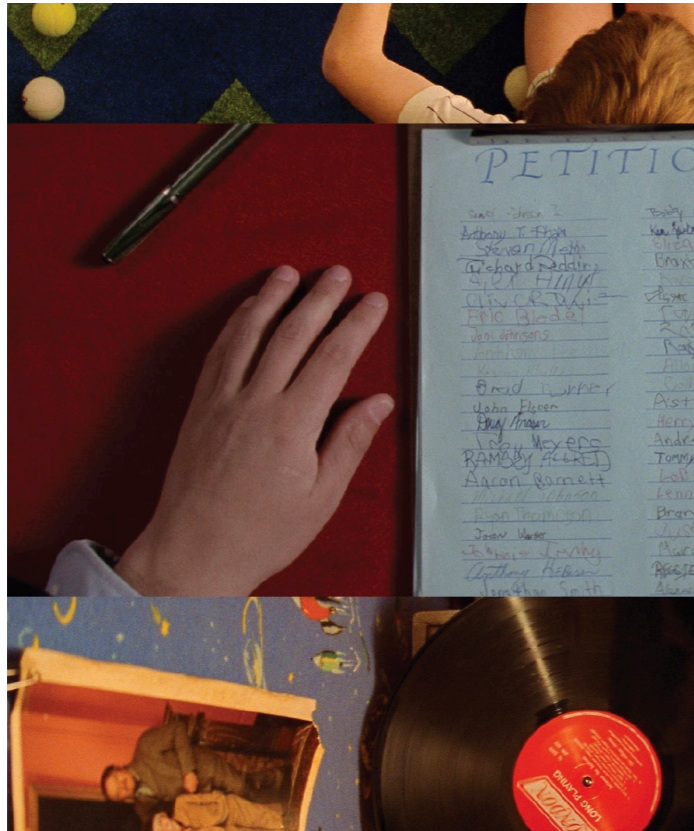
Heated towel rail

A warm fluffy towel feels lovely after a shower. But did you know that leaving a heated towel rail on will cost you about **\$3** per week? Switch it off and save yourself around **\$150** on your yearly power bill.

TIP



Appliances that have a stand-by light are often the biggest power users when not in use. Switch off your TV, computer, speakers and game consoles at the wall when you're not using them.



REDUCE YOUR HOT WATER USAGE

Did you know that hot water makes up about a third of your power bill in winter? That's a huge chunk of money! However, a few simple changes can help you make some big savings here. Let's have a look at a few.



Timing the shower

The more hot water you use, the more you'll pay. Each 15-minute shower will cost you about **\$1** – think about how many people you have in your house, and it'll give you an idea of how much it's costing you per day. If you can shorten the showers down to five minutes, you'll save **66c** each time. That's an average of **\$5** per person per week.



Stop the drips

A dripping hot tap can waste more than 70 litres of water a day. This can add over **\$200** a year to your power bill! If you are renting, notify your landlord as soon as you notice a drip – fixing a tap that's dripping from normal wear-and-tear is usually their responsibility.



Showers rule

Taking a nice hot bubble bath in winter feels like pure bliss. Unfortunately, it costs about twice as much as a shower each time. Keep baths to a minimum and make sure the shower is the first option.



Too much flow

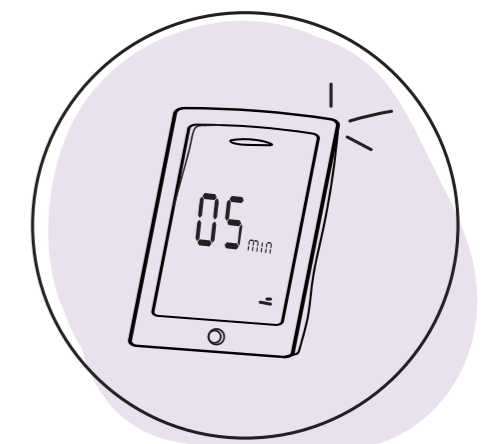
Sometimes the shower pumps out more water than you need, and you end up wasting a lot of hot water down the drain. You can easily check how much water is wasted with a bucket and timer. Put the bucket under the showerhead and turn on the taps – if it fills up in less than one minute, it's wasting money. Efficient showerheads can be expensive, but you can also buy water flow restrictors that reduce the water flow and cost much less. Failing that, just don't turn the taps all the way to full!



Cold wash laundry

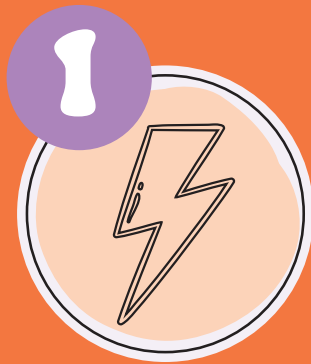
Putting on a warm wash will set you back about **30c**. A cold wash often performs just as well and only costs **6c** per wash. A whānau with children and endless washing can make some savings here – approximately **\$50** per year in fact, if your family does about four laundry washes per week.

TIP



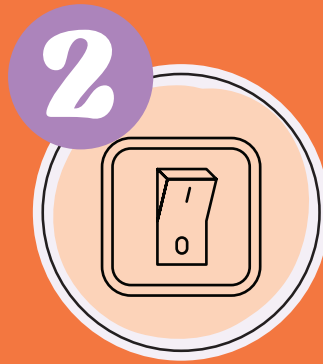
Put your phone timer to good use. Set it to five minutes to encourage everyone to take shorter showers, especially if you have teenagers in the house!

The five small changes you can make that add up to big savings on your annual power bill:



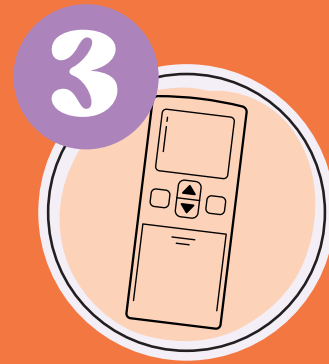
Check to make sure you're on the cheapest power plan that best suits your whānau

save \$300 – 400



Switch off unused appliances at the wall when you're not using them

save \$100



Set your heat pump to a maximum of 21 degrees

save \$X



Change your washing machine settings to cold wash

save \$50



Get out of the shower after five minutes

save \$260 per person

For more advice and information, visit Save500.org.nz.