HOW TO DO AN ENERGY AUDIT

How much energy does your household use?

Unfortunately your energy bill isn't itemised like your mobile phone bill or a shopping receipt, so it can be hard to tell how much energy you are using in your home, and which appliances may be using it.

Doing a home energy audit can help you to:

Pinpoint the main energy users in your home

Find ways to reduce your energy use

Make your home more comfortable to live in

Save money

Here are some tips to get you started.

1 Get to know your energy bill

It's important to understand your energy bill including all the fine print. This will help you to assess your energy use patterns so you can begin to make changes and savings around your home.

Start by comparing your use from the same period in the previous year. You can get a picture of your energy consumption in different seasons. If your use is higher in winter or summer, you might want to look at the reasons and some options for reducing it.

Next, consider the times of day when you use the most energy. This will be an important guide in selecting the right energy contract. Are you home during the day or does your family arrive home together in the afternoon? Change when you consume energy away from peak times when energy can be more expensive. For example, by running your washing machine late at night you may be able to choose a contract that rewards this change.

2 How does your home's energy use compare to your neighbours?

Compare your home's energy use, in kilowatts per hour (KWh), to the average home energy use in your area. You can find average KWh readings for postcode area here – https://www.energymadeeasy.gov.au/benchmark

3 Check for air leaks

Up to 25% of heat loss during winter can be caused by draughts caused by air leaks. Check windows, junctions of the floor and ceiling, doors and lighting, as well as plumbing fixtures. If you find a crack or gap, seal it up.

Heavy curtains and door snakes can assist in preventing heat loss. Make sure you also close doors to prevent heating or cooling escaping to other rooms not being used.

4 Check your insulation

Insulation in your ceiling and walls acts as a barrier to keep your home warm in winter and cool in summer. Having inadequate insulation means that you need to run your heating or cooling for longer.

You can find out more about insulation here - https://www.yourhome.gov.au/passive-design/insulation

5 Check your heating and cooling equipment

It's important to check your heating and cooling equipment annually, or as recommended by the manufacturer. Make sure you check filters and replace them as needed. Also, check your ductwork for dirt streaks, especially near seams as these may indicate air leaks.

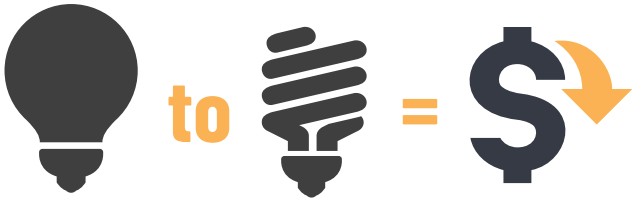
Most people will find a temperature between 18°C and 21°C comfortable for heating, and a temperature between 24°C and 27°C comfortable for cooling. Every 1°C higher adds 10% to the running costs of your appliance.

Use the sun to your advantage - open blinds early to help heat up your home, or keep blinds closed to help keep your home cool.

Reversible ceiling fans can also create cool breezes in summer and can redirect warm air down in winter.

Did you know?

Compared to traditional incandescents, energy-efficient lightbulbs, typically use about 25%-80% less energy than traditional incandescents, saving you money, they can also last 3-25 times longer.



6 Check your lighting

Lighting can account for around 10% of your electricity bill.

Replace inefficient halogen lights with energy-saving Light-Emitting Diodes (LED) lights. When shopping for new light bulbs, consider the brightness of the light and how you can use controls such as sensors, dimmers, or timers to reduce lighting use. This is especially helpful if outdoor lights are often left on.

Check out the Light Bulb Saver App (found here - https://www.energyrating.gov.au/apps#toc1) to find out how much you could save by changing your light bulbs. The app also provides handy tips about choosing the right lighting for each room in your house.

7 Identify energy guzzling appliances

Old fridges, pool filters and small fan heaters can use lots of energy. One simple trick (if you don't have a smart meter) is to multiply the wattage of the appliance (often found on the base) by the number of hours used per day. Divide this by 1000 to obtain your daily kWh and then multiply by the rate per kWh on your energy bill to find out how much the appliance is costing you each day.

When purchasing appliances, remember that lower-cost appliances may end up costing you more in energy costs over the lifetime of the product. Choose appliances that suit your needs and use the lowest number of watts or megajoules.

8 Unplug an item when it is not in use

Standby power can account for more than 10% of your household electricity use.

Any items with a little light on or clock are using power, and your mobile phone charger is drawing power even when your phone is not plugged in. Turn off appliances at the wall when you're not using them—it's a very easy way to save energy.