

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 \$400 and \$500 per year when they change plan.

How to find a cheaper plan

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

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:

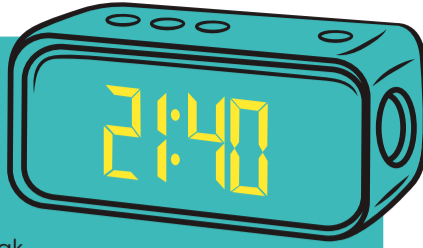
- have a smart meter at your house
- commit to the plan for 12 to 24 months
- pay for your power in advance
- only pay online.

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.

Time of use plans

Free 'hour of power' deals and low off-peak rates offer a great opportunity to save money, especially if you're able to shift some of your household power use to these cheaper times.

Check the specifics of a plan you're interested in by clicking the plus sign next to 'Plan details' on the Powerswitch site or by speaking to your electricity provider.



What to do if it's hard to pay your bills

It is important to tell your power company if you are having trouble paying your electricity bills. If you let them know, they must help you to manage your power use and costs and offer you a payment support plan.

They must try to contact you at least five times before they disconnect your power.

If your electricity provider decides to disconnect you, they should not do it when it is harder for you to get re-connected. This means you should not be disconnected just before a weekend or public holiday, early in the morning or late at night.

If you are medically dependent on electricity

Your electricity must not be disconnected if you or someone in your house is registered as a 'medically dependent consumer'. That means you need a supply of electricity in your home to stop serious harm to health. You must tell your electricity provider if you or someone in your house is medically dependent so they can help you register.

Visit yourpower.co.nz for more information.

Know your power-hungry appliances



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 \$200 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 35¢ a meal, and you can use cheaper cuts of meat – win-win!



Drying clothes

A regular, vented clothes dryer can cost up to \$3 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 light bulb will cost you about 15¢ each evening to run. This all adds up, so be sure to turn off lights 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 3¢ over an evening, which could save you around \$90 a year with all LED lighting.



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.

How to switch

People are often surprised just how easy switching power plans 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 contact you to either talk you through their offer (via phone or email) or invite you to sign up online.

4

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

5

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

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.



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 \$400–\$500



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

save \$200



Set your heat pump to a maximum of 21 degrees

save \$40



Change your washing machine settings to cold wash

save \$30–\$50



Switch to LED light bulbs

save \$90

It pays to CHANGE

Easy changes you can make to save up to \$500 on your power bill across the year

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



Keep heat in and moisture out

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 open the windows for at least 10 minutes each day to help the house breathe out all that damp, stale air. Alternatively, if you have secure window stays, leave the windows cracked open 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.

Curtains and 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.



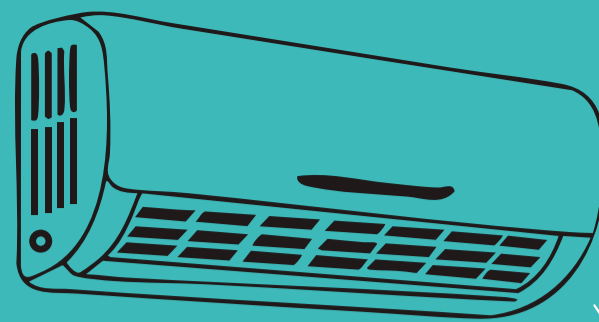
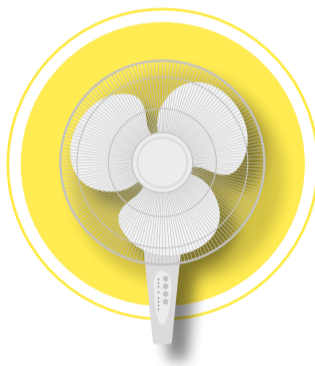
Draughts

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!



Use a fan

When you heat a room, the heat rises to the ceiling and eventually works its way out 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!



Get the most out of your heat pump

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 can lead to an eye-watering power bill.

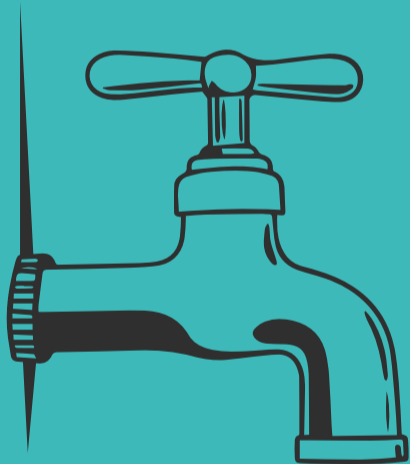
To get the most out of your heat pump, change the mode on the controller so it's on heat – click 'mode' until the little sun icon shows on the screen. From there, set the temperature between 19 and 21 degrees. Doing this can save you around **\$40** a year.

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 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 and you can save up to **\$50** per year in running costs.

Reduce your hot water usage



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 1 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!

Stop the drips

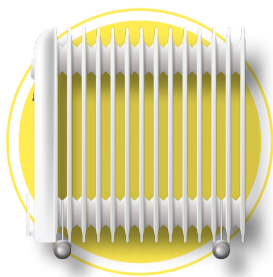
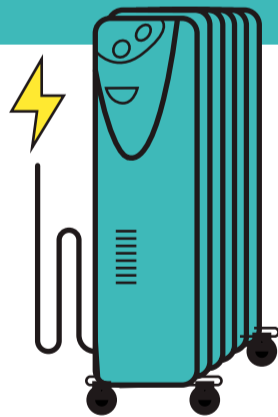
A dripping hot tap can waste more than 70 litres of water a day. This can add over **\$200** a year to your power bill! If you are renting, notify your landlord as soon as you notice a drip – fixing a tap that's dripping from normal wear and tear is usually their responsibility.

Cold laundry wash

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

Use the right heater in the right room

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 **40-60¢** an hour. However, they don't all deliver heat in the same way, and some are better suited to certain rooms over others.

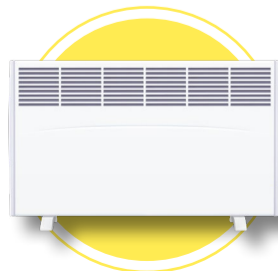


Bedrooms

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.

Living areas

While a heat pump is the most efficient option for larger living areas, if you don't have one, 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.



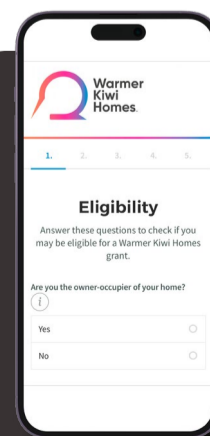
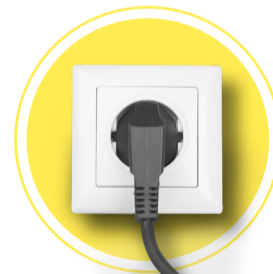
Just keeping you warm

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.



What size do you need?

Most of the heaters you come across will be either 2,000W or 2,400W. 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 1,000W or below will probably just take the edge off the cold, rather than keep the room warm.



The Warmer Kiwi Homes programme covers up to 90% of the costs to purchase and install insulation and up to 80% off an efficient heater, to help you save money on your power bills while you enjoy a warmer, healthier home. You may be eligible 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. Visit warmerkiwhomes.govt.nz or call **0800 749 782** to check if you're eligible.