

Behavioural changes -reduces energy use and costs



By changing some habits, you can save money, be more comfortable and reduce your greenhouse gases at the same time!

What is the problem?

Most of us care about the environment and climate change but sometimes we don't know where to start in taking action. We do not always need to rely on costly technologies to reduce our energy use. Often it is our everyday behaviours that have a significant impact on energy consumption. Generally we are creatures of habit so if we relearn simple actions they can be sustained forever.

What can I do?

Heating & Cooling

To not over heat in winter or over cool in summer is very important. Keeping the heater thermostat between 18-20oC, and the cooler thermostat in summer between 25-28oC, can keep you comfortable but save you money and greenhouse emissions. A difference of just one degree can reduce energy consumption and greenhouse pollution by up to 10%. Similarly, closing off areas that don't need heating/cooling saves a lot of energy. If it is possible, turn on the fan instead of the air conditioner.



Fans only use a fraction of the energy and money needed to run an air conditioner. But if you do use an air conditioner, make sure you avoid using it all day, switch it on for a few hours if and only when it is necessary. Also, keep it well maintained to lower running costs and increase efficiency.

Lighting

To utilise the natural light from the sun is great both in terms of heating your house and decreasing the need for artificial lighting. Leave curtains open in the day in winter to enable sunlight to heat up your home. Maximise the use of natural light, and when replacing your light globes, exchange regular incandescent lights with compact fluorescent lights (CFLs). You can also replace energy hungry halogen downlights with free-standing lamps. The cost of your lighting will depend on the type of lighting you select and the length of time you leave your lights on.

Hot water

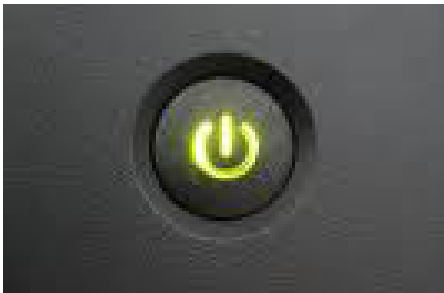
Heating water also uses energy. To save energy, and water, start with minimising the time you spend in the shower. Try using a shower timer to prompt you for a four minute maximum shower or listen to the radio and have a shower for one song. In addition, only wash full washing machines and wash in cold water, this still makes your clothes clean! If you haven't already changed your shower head to an efficient one; this is a cheap and easy thing to do.

Refrigeration

If you have an extra fridge, get rid of it or only turn it on for special occasions. A fridge uses around 11% of energy in the home. The fridge should be located away from cooking and heating equipment and sunlight if possible.

Stand-by power

Reducing stand by electricity can make a bigger difference than you think. Remembering to switch off appliances at the power point and unplugging chargers and transformers when not in use is a great habit to reinforce. You can reduce 10% on your household's energy bills just by switching off at the wall.



Efficient appliances

Considering energy use when making significant purchases is also important to save energy. Look for the stars label to choose more efficient appliances – the more stars the better. Also do a bit of research before major appliances break down. For example, consider which hot water heater you would replace yours with. Solar hot water heaters and gas boosted heaters are the more energy efficient than electric ones. Avoid purchasing energy guzzling plasma TVs.

What do I save?

An average Victorian household produces 12,000 kg of greenhouse gases every year. In the table to the right are a few statistics on how your behaviour and simple actions can reduce energy costs and your carbon footprint!

Your behaviour at home is your choice you will see the results of the behavioural changes when your utility bill comes.

Energy saving measure	GHG savings (kgCO _{2e})	Bill saving (\$/Yr)
Lower heater thermostat by 2 °C - central heating	890	\$151
Raise cooler thermostat by 2 °C - air conditioning	70	\$4
Close off areas that don't need heating	360	\$60
Close off areas that don't need heating	90	\$12
Use a fan instead of an air conditioner	410	\$54
Switch off lights in rooms not being used	190	\$24
Replace one 75W light globe with 15W CFL in high use areas	140	\$19
Take 4 minute shower instead of 7 minute shower	110/person	\$20/person
Wash clothes in cold water instead of warm - average household	130	\$22
Install a low flow shower rose	280	\$48
Switch off appliances at the power point when not in use	390	\$80
Switch off the second fridge when not required	730	\$95
Total	3790	\$559

(Source: Sustainability Victoria, based on energy data from ABARE for 06/07)

For further information around action on climate change

> If you want to find out how your voice can join with a collective cry for action to reduce greenhouse emissions contact MEFL on 9385 8585.

> Or visit www.mefl.com.au