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# Energy tips to cut winter costs



Recently appointed West Alness Save and Value Energy project manager, Brad McKibben takes time out from doing her rounds of households in the area to offer tips that can be an immediate money-saver

IT'S an expensive time of year isn't it? Unfortunately it hits more after Christmas when the bills start coming in. Here are my 12 tips for a money, and energy, saving Christmas:

1. With everyone home during the holidays, a lot of body heat is generated, even from the pets!

You can turn your heating down a degree or two and still be cosy. A 1C decrease can cut 10 per cent off your fuel bill. Do make sure your temperature is still 21-23C in your main living area and 18C in other rooms though.

2. If you're going away over the holidays but don't want to completely turn the heating off, reduce the amount of time you have the heating on for and turn

down the thermostat considerably. You still won't come back to a freezing (or flooded) house.

3. Remember to turn off all those energy guzzling Christmas presents or gadgets at the mains when you go to bed. Stereos, TVs, games consoles, sky boxes etc can use up to 70 per cent of the power they would when switched on if left on standby mode. Switching these off can save up to 10 per cent on your bills.

4. Switch off the Christmas tree lights when you are not in or put them onto a timer if you want them on to welcome you home.

5. On the darker winter days, light sensitive outdoor lights sometimes come on

during the day. If possible switch these off until you need the light on for Santa to find you.

6. With more rooms used at Christmas, make sure the lights in them have energy saving bulbs fitted. These use only 20 per cent of the energy of ordinary bulbs. Decoratively shaped ones can be found on a quick internet search.

7. Defrost your freezer before Christmas – it will work more efficiently and create more space to store the leftovers so they don't go to waste.

8. Use the right sized pots for your cooking rings so no heat escapes around the sides.

9. Once boiling, turn the heat down under your spuds to a simmer, always

have a lid on so less heat escapes.

10. Use divided saucepans to cook your spuds and sprouts at the same time.

11. Always allow leftovers to cool down completely before putting them into the fridge or freezer (make sure they are safe from hungry paws).

12. Only boil the right amount of water needed for your cuppa.

I hope this helps you save some energy and money not just over the holidays but well into the New Year. For any further energy efficiency information or supplier queries contact Brid at WASP (West Alness Save and value energy Project) on 07920 437526 or [brid@westalnesssave.org.uk](mailto:brid@westalnesssave.org.uk).