

Secondary glazing

The low-cost alternative to double glazing

About 10% of the heat loss from a typical house is through the windows with a further 15% due to draughts. Secondary glazing can be a cost effective way of reducing this heat loss and making your home more comfortable

For some householders replacing old single-glazed windows with modern double-glazing is not an option. This may be due to the cost involved, or because the house is listed or in a conservation area where original features like sash windows have to be retained.

However it is still possible to cut out the draughts and reduce heat loss through windows using various forms of secondary glazing. Some types of secondary glazing can be bought from your local hardware store and fitted yourself; others are more specialist. Some of the secondary-glazing options listed below are not allowed in listed buildings, so check first.

Transparent film

The simplest and cheapest form of secondary glazing is thin transparent plastic film which you install yourself using strips of double-sided sticky tape around the frame of the window. The material looks like 'cling-film', but if fitted properly it is wrinkle-free and almost invisible. To install, apply the tape to the frame of the window, cut the film to size and attach it carefully to the tape until it creates a seal. Then *carefully* shrink the film with hot air from a hairdryer until it pulls taught, and trim any excess film from around the edges.



Enough film to cover a large bay-window costs £10-15 and is available from DIY stores. The film is simple to remove, though it can damage paintwork.



Keeping warm air in the house will save you money on heating. See over for other energy-saving tips ...



Windows let the light in, but let the warmth out, too. Secondary glazing helps keep the warm air at home

Temporary secondary glazing

Next up, in terms of expense, complexity and permanence are the systems in which a sheet of rigid and transparent material like clear acrylic plastic is fitted to the window frame, in such a way that it can be put up or taken down as the season requires. Some systems use magnet strips to attach the secondary glazing to the frame, others a Velcro-like material. A particularly popular method is 'clip and stick' where uPVC edging is used to clip the panel in place over the window frame. These types of glazing also help reduce noise.



Semi-permanent secondary glazing

Some of the more expensive types of secondary glazing are semi-permanent and are fixed either by screwing them into place or using a strong adhesive or sealant. They can be made of heavy materials like glass. On wider windows they can slide open on tracks to allow the windows to open as normal. This type are not generally suitable for DIY.



Sash windows are notorious for letting in cold air. You can get clear, light-weight acrylic panels to fit over the glazed frames, but these don't cover the many gaps on the sides, top and bottom that make sash frames particularly draughty.

A few ways to cut your electricity and gas use, and save money ...



Give your clothes a day in the sun; and give your tumble drier a break. Clothes dried in the fresh air feel great, and there are drying days in winter, too.

When you're cooking, keep the oven door shut as much as possible; every time you open it, nearly a quarter of the heat escapes.



Food in the oven cooks faster when the air inside flows freely, so don't put foil on the racks.

Don't leave your phone on charge all night. It only needs three hours – and try not to leave the TV and other kit on stand-by.



Catch 'em young. Encourage your children to switch off electric toys and lights that they're not using. They'll soon get the hang of saving energy.

Cup of tea or coffee? Only fill the kettle with as much water as you'll actually use (but make sure you cover the metal element at the base).



Dodge the draught!

Fit draught-excluders to your front door, letter box and key hole, and draw your curtains at dusk to keep the heat in.

Buying a new appliance? Look out for the energy rating and buy A-rated goods for the most efficient.

Be a friend to your freezer. Defrost it regularly to help it run more efficiently.



Turn your heating down by 1 degree. You'll hardly notice the change in temperature, but it'll make a big difference to your heating bill.



Wait until you have a full load before running the dishwasher or washing machine. One full load uses less energy (and water) than two half-loads.

Sleep tight. Make sure all the lights are turned off when you go to bed, or use a low-wattage night light if you do need to leave one on.



Put your fridge in a good spot. Somewhere the air can circulate behind it, but not next to a cooker or radiator.

New computer?

Laptops typically use around 85% less energy than a new desktop PC.



Last updated, Feb 2016



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Founded: 1979

The Centre for Sustainable Energy is a national charity that helps people change the way they think and act on energy.

Our Home Energy Team offers free advice on domestic energy use to householders in Bristol, Somerset, North Somerset, Bath & North East Somerset, Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire and Dorset.



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