

## KEEP WARM IDEAS

### General ideas

Wear plenty of layers. Clothes made from wool, cotton or fleecy fabrics are warmest. When indoors, wear warm socks and slippers to keep your feet cosy.

Use a hot water bottle when sitting and relaxing.

Have regular hot drinks and food such as porridge, soups and stews.

Keep as active as possible to boost your circulation. Move around at least once an hour and avoid sitting still for long periods. Even light exercise will help keep you warm. When you do sit down, put your feet up as it's coldest nearest the ground.

If you're able to, keep your main living room at 18–21°C (64–70°F) and the rest of your house at 16°C (61°F) at least. If you can't heat all the rooms you use, heat the living room during the day and the bedroom just before you go to sleep. Get a Programmable Thermostat. These thermostats are great because they help keep you warm while keeping your energy costs low. In bed, use either a hot water bottle or an electric blanket.

Get rid of drafts. Hunt down drafts of cold air and seal them. Consider using draft excluders around doors and windows.

Put down rugs on cold tiled and uninsulated floors. Rugs will help make sure that your feet stay warm as you are walking around and act as a trap for heat.

Keep furniture away from vents and heaters / radiators. Give heaters extra space so that the warm air can flow into your home instead of being absorbed by your furniture.

Close doors and use a keyhole cover to block draughts. If possible, consider buying thermal linings for curtains to keep the heat in. Grab a roll of good quality aluminium foil from the kitchen cupboard and attach it to the wall behind radiators, shiny side up. This isn't as bizarre as it sounds. It will reflect heat back into the room, ensuring that you get the most from your central heating. Don't forget that air leaks can also be in your kitchen hood vents, and attics. Find those tiny leaks and use caulking to seal them off. Garage doors are big and when left open can leave your home cold. Consider adding insulation to your garage door to trap any cold air and keep the warm air inside. Improving the insulation in your home will make a huge difference to how effectively heat can be retained.

Have your heating system serviced regularly to make sure it works well.

Keep the oven door open after cooking.

Seal off the chimney if not in use. Most homes have a chimney that is no longer used to vent smoke. Unfortunately, a chimney can let in both cold and hot air at the same time. Statistics show that homeowners lose 4% of their heat through the chimney. Avoid leaving your chimney open unless you're using it to vent the fireplace. Seal an unused chimney with a chimney balloon to prevent the warm indoor air from escaping. A draught excluder is another excellent option to seal off the chimney.

Improve the efficiency of an existing wood stove. If you already have a wood-burning stove in your home, there are also certain tricks you can employ to make sure that it is working as efficiently as possible to keep your home warm this winter. Make sure the flue is clean and clear. Choose the right firewood. Some woods, such as oak and ash, for example, are much better than others for your stove. Make sure that the wood you use on your fire is properly seasoned. Make sure that you set the stove for the right amount of draw. (Too much airflow and you will burn through the fuel too quickly, too little airflow and it may not burn as hot). Consider adding a stove fan to help warm air from the stove circulate around your home.

Consider buying warm, heated gifts as Christmas presents, for example heated slippers, throws, electric blankets and microwavable heated pads.

The church Tower Room is open during the daytime as a friendly space for you to drop in and out or spend as much time as you wish. It is warm and comfortable with tea & coffee making facilities. Wi-Fi is also available. It is a welcoming space, not just for those who need somewhere warm but also for those who are lonely. Some members of the Cost of Living Liaison Group may drop in on an ad hoc basis.

## **WORKING FROM HOME**

**Close your doors and windows** First things first, you want to do everything you can to get yourself warm without spending excess money. This means keeping the doors and windows closed to retain heat. If your home office is a box room, it's tempting to make it feel less claustrophobic by keeping the door open, however, by closing doors and windows, you can keep the heat in the room and stay warmer for longer.

**Warm up your feet.** Another free solution is making sure your feet are nice and toasty. Having cold feet tends to bring down our body temperature. Wearing some good, warm slippers or slipper socks can significantly help to keep you warm during office hours.

**Preheat your office.** You're probably going to have to reconcile with turning your heating on at some point. Running your heating is cheapest between 11pm and 7am, so get into the habit of setting your timer to heat your office for an hour or two before you start work, and make sure to switch it off before 7am.

**Ask your employer for money.** If you're working at home but employed by a company, you may be eligible to claim expenses from your employer. It's a good idea to ask your boss about home working expenses. If you are eligible, you may get up to £312 a year towards things like heating and broadband bills.

**Try a heated gilet.** If all else fails, you might need to buy a heated gilet to wear at your desk. These clever items are really effective for helping to keep you warm and cost less than five pence a day to run.

**Get moving.** You can also encourage your body to stay warm by moving it around. Whenever you can, walk around the room, use your stairs and keep your body moving.

If you have to be at your desk, you could get an under mini, under-desk exercise bike. As well as keeping you warm, it can help you to stay fit, which is particularly useful for those who spend a lot of time sitting at your desk.

**Use the church.** The church Tower Room is heated and is open during the daytime as a friendly space for you to drop in and out or spend as much time as you wish. Wi-Fi is available

#### **CHECK WHAT SUPPORT YOU CAN GET**

Don't miss out on benefits. Depending on your circumstances you may get the Winter Fuel or Cold Weather Payments automatically. If you don't, visit [gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment](http://gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment) or call 0800 731 0160 to see if you're eligible.

You may also be entitled to claim an Affordable Warmth Grant, which could help with heating and insulation improvements. For more information, call the Energy Saving Advice Service or visit [gov.uk/energy-company-obligation](http://gov.uk/energy-company-obligation).

*If you have any questions or require information, that is not covered by the contents of this leaflet please email [qmcostoflivingcrisis@gmail.com](mailto:qmcostoflivingcrisis@gmail.com) or leave your question in the suggestion box in St Giles Church.*

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