



capacity global

living in a clean and healthy environment is everyone's right

One Planet Culture

This month, One Planet Culture features the sleek and sculpted Wattson energy monitor and the issue of saving energy. Three lucky winners will get their own Wattson and the ability to see just how much energy they use at home. This factsheet is just an introduction to saving energy; to find out more, visit the Capacity Global website and the links included below.

Introduction to climate change

Climate change is the greatest environmental challenge facing the world today. Rising temperatures will bring hotter summers and milder winters, more winter rainfall and more frequent storms, rising sea levels and storm surge heights.

The rise in temperature is due mainly to the increase of several gases in our atmosphere, such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. Similar to the glass of a greenhouse, these gases trap heat from the sun, creating the conditions for life on Earth. Nature has always been able to keep the right balance of these 'greenhouse gases' in the atmosphere – until now.

Modern human activity such as deforestation and industrial agriculture emit much more quantities of these gases than natural processes can handle. And just as double-glazed windows trap more heat in the greenhouse, the accumulation of these gases makes the Earth hotter.

Why we all need to save energy

Unfortunately, almost everything we do will cause some amount of greenhouse gas emissions (or 'carbon emissions') – the way we travel, the production of the things we buy, and especially the energy we use. The key is to keep the emissions we're responsible for down to a sustainable level, and there are two main ways to do that.

The first way is to use as little energy as possible. According to a recent survey from the Energy Saving Trust, we are the most energy-wasteful people in Europe. The energy we waste as a nation each year is now about the same as powering an additional 7 million non-existent homes!

By reducing the amount of energy we use, we can reduce the amount of carbon emissions produced from generating that energy. We can also save ourselves a small fortune in energy bills just by taking a few simple hints to curb our energy wastage. But the more we're willing to change our daily lifestyles, the more carbon emissions and money we can all save.

The second way is by changing the way our energy is generated. In the UK, only 14% of our electricity comes from clean renewable sources, and over 70% comes from fuels that produce carbon emissions, like coal, oil and gas. The worst of them is coal, which is 1.5 times worse than fuel oil and more than 2.5 times worse than gas!

Most of us don't produce our own electricity, so that means you need to know how your supplier produces theirs. Check out www.fuelmix.co.uk and find out how much coal, oil and gas your supplier uses, then switch to a 'green' tariff that uses as much renewable energy as possible. You can also write to your supplier or local MP to promote more renewable energy production.

How to save energy

As an individual and as part of your community, you can change your behaviour and make choices for a more sustainable lifestyle. Here are a few ideas on how to save energy:

- **Turn off the lights when you leave the room.** Around 25% of our carbon dioxide emissions come from heating and lighting our homes and the energy used for household appliances.
- **Switch off electrical appliances at the wall.** Items left on standby can use up to 85% of the energy they would use if fully switched on. www.carbontrust.co.uk/energy
- **Insulate your roof and cavity walls.** You can cut your heating costs and the associated emissions by up to one-third! www.energysavingtrust.org.uk
- **Avoid tumble drying or ironing.** Tumble dryers are the most energy-intensive household appliance and an hour of ironing uses more energy than washing an entire load of clothes! If you're drying clothes inside, don't put them on the radiator and block it from heating; instead, put them on a rack or clothes horse, and open a window slightly for ventilation. www.bbc.co.uk/bloom
- **Get an eco-audit or a home energy report.** Find out how you can save energy – businesses can contact the Carbon Trust, homeowners can call the Energy Saving Trust, and if you own a community hall, contact ACRE. www.acre.org.uk
- **Switch to a 'green' renewable energy tariff.** Electricity produced from renewable sources like solar or windpower don't use any oil, unlike natural gas. www.cse.org.uk
- **Tell your family and friends to become more sustainable too!** As individuals, we may not think we can do much good by ourselves, but collectively, we have the power to change the world. Become an Every Action Counts Community Champion and spread the word!

For more information

If you're interested in learning more about saving energy or other actions you can do to save the environment, Capacity Global and the Every Actions Counts (EAC) programme can help. We provide advice and support to individuals and voluntary and community organisations who are looking to reduce their impact on the environment and tackle climate change.

Visit the Capacity Global and Every Action Counts websites:

www.capacity.org.uk

www.everyactioncounts.org.uk

To find an EAC Community Champion in your area, contact Claire Lyon at BTCV on 01302 388 841 or email c.lyon@btcv.org.uk.