

What uses watt?

How much electricity am I using?

Millions of UK households are facing an energy crisis. The steep increases in the cost of electricity mean that it's more important than ever to find savings.

Some electrical appliances use a lot of electricity. Others don't. As a rule, those with moving parts or which produce heat use much more than those that produce light or sound. So if you want to save electricity, there's no point worrying about a digital clock or an electric razor since these use so little power you would hardly notice the difference. The big savings lie elsewhere.

Every appliance has a power rating, usually given in watts (W) or kilowatts (kW) (1000W = 1kW). This is the amount of electricity it needs in order to work. Of course, the amount of electricity it uses depends on how long it's on for. An item like a fridge has a low wattage, but because it's on all the time it'll use a lot of electricity. And although an iron is only used now and again, it uses a lot of electricity so the quicker you do your ironing the better.

Electricity is sold by the kilowatt-hour (kWh) – usually referred to as 'units' on your electricity bill. You can work out how much an appliance costs to run by multiplying its wattage by the amount of time it's on and then by the cost of electricity. So let's say you have a 500W (0.5 kW) dehumidifier and you run it for a whole day (24 hours). It will use 12kWh of electricity (e.g. half a kilowatt every hour). Electricity now costs 34p per unit, so multiply 12kWh by



The largest proportion of most household's electricity bill comes from running appliances like washing machines, dishwashers and electric showers.

34p and you get a grand total of 408p, or £4.08. This is what it costs to run the dehumidifier all day.

The table on the following page shows what it costs to use a range of common appliances. **These are based on a unit price for electricity of 34p per kWh (the price cap after 1 October 2022).**

Bear in mind that sometimes a higher-wattage appliance will actually use less power overall than a lower-wattage one because it is well designed and does its job quicker. An energy efficient dish washer, for example, may have a power rating of 2kW – the same (or higher) as a non-energy efficient one. But it completes its cycle quicker, so while it may use the same (or more) electricity per hour, it's working for less time so uses less energy overall. In other words, don't judge the energy efficiency of a device only

Electric shower
£3.06/hour



Tumble drier
From 85p/hour



Hair drier
11p for ten minutes



Oil-fired radiator
From 68p/hour



Electric mower
From 34p/hour



Vacuum cleaner
From 31p/hour



Phone charger
Almost nothing at all!





Costs of running a range of common appliances

Based on a unit price for electricity of **34p per kWh** (the price cap after 1 October 2022)

Appliance (with typical power rating*)	Cost per hour**	Cost per 10 mins	Appliance (with typical power rating*)	Cost per hour**	Cost per 10 mins
Electric shower (9000 W)	£3.06	51p	Freezer (150 W)***	5p	-
Immersion heater (3000 W)	£1.02	-	Fridge (150 W)***	5p	-
Kettle (3000 W)	-	17p	Heating blanket (150 W)	5p	1p
Tumble Dryer (2500 W)	85p	14p	Desktop computer (140 W)	5p	1p
Electric heaters (2500 W)	85p	14p	Games console (120 W)	4p	1p
Oven (2100 W)***	71p	-	LCD TV (120 W)	4p	1p
Washing machine (2100 W)	71p	-	Laptop (50 W)	2p	-
Oil-filled radiator (2000 W)	68p	11p	TV box (40 W)	1p	-
Hairdryer (2000 W)	-	11p	DVD player (40 W)	1p	-
Hob (2000 W)	61p	11p	Extractor fan (20 W)	1p	-
Grill (1500 W)	51p	9p	Broadband router (10 W)	1p	-
Iron (1500 W)	51p	9p			
Toaster (1000 W)	-	6p			
Microwave (1000 W)	34p	6p			
Electric mower (1000 W)	34p	6p			
Vacuum cleaner (900 W)	31p	5p			
Dehumidifier (500 W)	17p	-			
Towel rail (450 W)	15p	-			
Plasma TV (350 W)	12p	2p			
Fridge-freezer (300 W)***	10p	-			

* We've taken an *average* power rating for each appliance; the *actual* power rating will depend on the size and specifications of the appliance. So the cost of running, say, your microwave, could be less than the figure given, or more.

** For some appliances we've only listed the cost for either an hour (column 2) or 10 minutes (column 3).

*** Appliances like ovens, fridges and freezers turn themselves off when they reach the required temperature, so for some of the time that they're in use they won't be using much or any electricity. So the daily cost of running a fridge or freezer is not 24 x the hourly cost.

by its given power rating, particularly if it is controlled with thermostat or operates on a timed cycle.

Instead, if you're buying a new fridge or TV or other appliance, the best way to judge its energy efficiency is the label. Those rated A or above are the most efficient for their size. To compare between differently sized appliances, energy labels also now print suggested kWh usage per annum for each appliance.



Energy monitors

These are wireless devices that can tell you useful things like how much electricity is being used at that moment, as well as how much was used last week or last month. Your energy supplier will give you an energy monitor (also called in-home display) if you have a smart meter.



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