



KEEP WARM

Quando, quando, quando...

The time at which you set your heating to come on can also benefit from a little thought. We know several people that have timed boilers and don't use them. They often go into the house or office soaking wet and freezing cold, then whack the heating up – on full power – until they thaw out! If you're in the position where you arrive somewhere at roughly the same time on most days, set your heaters to come on a little earlier, but at a lower temperature. That way, the place is already warm when you arrive and the temperature is immediately noticeable. Simple!

When it gets cold here in the office, Stu sucks on an extra strong mint and we gather round his tongue for warmth. It's not pretty, but it's cheap. There are more practical things you can do, though, to make sure you're conveniently warm in winter... Check out these top tips and avoid the kolled wethor (that's a bad spell of cold weather to you!)

Heard of the 80/20 principle?

If so, you could be using that to keep warm! This 'natural law', also known as the 'Pareto Principle', suggests that, in many situations, around 80% of results come from approximately 20% of the causes. So an example of this would be 80% of your turnover being generated by 20% of your client base, or 20% of a carpet getting 80% of the wear and tear... The law doesn't suggest that the relationship between correlatives is always 80/20, but it does suggest that it's almost always disproportionate!

In much the same way, then, you can see how you probably spend more or less 80% of your time in 20% of the rooms in your house! It's worth identifying which rooms they are and keeping the temperatures down in all the others. You'll immediately save money and will scarcely notice the difference...

To what degree?

You may have already read our 'Being green' Info Sheet, in which case you'll know that turning down your thermostat by just 1°C can save you quite a bit of money! As you can imagine, you'll hardly notice the difference of that one degree and, once you get used to that temperature, you might even find you can turn it down another notch or two!

Well, I'M hot, so there you are...

On public transport, you very often find some thoughtless soul who has yet to grasp a very simple idea about keeping comfortable. They stand in the cold waiting for a bus, tube or train and then climb on board... And the temperature inside strikes them as sweltering! Do they unzip their coats? Do they remove a jumper? Do they take off their hats? They do not...

They open a window! Now this rather self-focused mindset means environmental temperatures are often out of your control – perhaps it happens in your office, too? So here's an obvious answer that many overlook: wear a few thin layers instead of one thick one! Why?

Well, three reasons. Aside from the fact that you're often more easily able to move around, you can also exercise greater control over your personal temperature by peeling off whatever is appropriate... Finally, it's a simple fact that two or more thin jumpers trap more air between them and better help insulate against the cold.



Three little kittens lost their mittens...

And they began to cry! For very good reason. Mittens are *warmer* than gloves.

That's right! If you have a pair of gloves and a pair of mittens made from the exact same material, the mittens will keep you warmer – and we shall tell you for why! You see, heat escapes from things through their *surface areas*. Our skin, for example, has an enormous surface area, so we wear clothes to trap heat as it leaves the body as well as to keep the elements out...

Now, because mittens enclose your fingers as a group, the heat escaping from each digit is contained within one space, so the warmth escaping from your middle finger, say, is still beneficial to the fingers either side of it. And because a mitten also has a *smaller surface area* than five individually 'gloved' fingers, it also better retains heat!

No if's, and's or butts:

Need another reason to stop smoking? Well, if you don't like the cold, then good news! As well as the obvious – you won't need to go into the cold "for a fag" anymore – you may not know that your circulation is hugely affected by smoking! In fact, just one cigarette can shut down blood vessels in your toes, for example, for up to three hours! And if you've been a smoker regularly or plentifully for any length of time, then your arteries will be less efficient than once they were... Often, though, blood circulation improves within weeks of that last cigarette. Quit it & feel the difference!

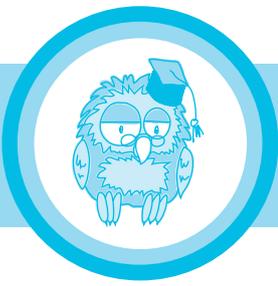
Old wives tales:

There's a bit of confusion over the benefit of wearing a hat these days... For years, people believed that "80% of body heat" was lost through the head and that wearing a hat retained this heat. Then someone muddied the water somewhat by saying it was a nonsense; experiments proved that the head lost no more and no less heat than any other part of the body! Lots of people now make themselves unpopular at parties by citing this.

Trouble is both points are correct! Experiments prove that you lose about the same amount of heat through the head as through any other part of the body – why wouldn't you? But traditionally, down our way at least, we do tend to cover the rest of the body with clothes! So if you're fully dressed but not wearing a hat then of course you'll be losing more heat through your head! Not 'cos your head's special, but 'cos the rest of you is already wrapped up... Ignore the 'myth buster', forget the smart aleck... Wear a hat and feel warmer.

Some of us have a better circulation than the Daily Mail...

And it almost went without saying! A little exercise goes a long way to getting the blood flowing and ensuring you keep warm. Think about it, though, and you'll realize that even a brisk walk in the cold will warm you up better than a casual plod. So if you're on your way somewhere and notice a chill... Pick up your pace!



"You need hands..."

as Max Bygraves said!
And poor old DeeJ tells a story about his hands being so cold when he filled out an application at a job interview once that his writing – poor at the best of times – became completely illegible! He even wrote a note explaining this, but that, too, looked like a cardiograph printout for an asthmatic ant. So bless him, he didn't get the job...

He might have, though, if he'd had a couple of gel hand-warmers tucked in his lint-lined pockets! These marvelous devices are available in numerous forms, but our favourites are the reusable liquid filled ones with a metal tab inside... You simply click on the tab and the fluid turns into a hard gel which generates heat for up to twenty five minutes! We strongly recommend them; check 'em out at somewhere like www.firebox.com

Shut that door!

Even if you've had the good sense to insulate your roof and install double glazing so that your house is snug and efficient, you might want to think about draft excluders. Now, years ago, these used to be long, cuddly-toy snakes that lay in front of doors to block out the draft! Trouble is they were hideous.

Really... Hideous!

Fortunately, these days the brush style excluders under doors and around letterboxes are quite effective, as is the old – but now little used – idea of hanging a curtain over a door. If this is quite thick, you can be sure that you'll be blocking a major source of drafts.

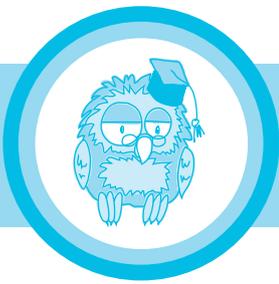
Open and shut:

On the subject of curtains, you probably realize already that it's usually better to open the curtains on the windows during the day to let in the sunlight, whereas from dusk onward, it's better to close them and retain the warmth. The heavier the fabric of the curtains, the better... Not like lead, obviously; there's a limit! In the summer, though, the reverse is true. Closing your curtains during the day helps stop sunlight warming up the house.

Drink warm fluids:

There's a myth that still does the rounds... It says drinking a hot drink will cool you down in the summer. The logic is that if you're warm and your body senses more heat coming in, it'll think: "Hmmm... I'm getting even hotter! I need to produce more sweat to cool down!" which is kind of correct... Your body does sweat a little more to try and compensate BUT you don't sweat enough from drinking the hot drink to offset its effect! In other words, hot drinks do make you warmer.

For that reason, drinking a hot drink in the cold is a tip in itself. Whether you're going for tea or coffee – which aren't ideal as they're dehydrating – or going for peppermint tea, soup, or hot water with a slice of lemon, say, the benefits of this are often immediately noticeable. It's like being warmed up from the inside out!!



We are not alone:

Finally, without being too preachy, we'll ask you to remember something: if you're reading this first hand, there's a good chance that you're better off than many others as regards keeping warm! If you have a vulnerable neighbour or relative, print them a copy of this and check on them from time to time...

Stu, for example, had a neighbour who suffered from the cold and, having read this sheet, he got her to walk for 20 minutes a day, every day. By now, he says, she could be anywhere and it's someone else's problem...

No! No, that's outrageous! The serious point we're making, though, is that even if you don't personally make time to check on someone this winter, please see if you can spare a little something for the homeless charity 'Shelter'.

You can donate via <http://england.shelter.org.uk/donate>
remember – every penny helps.

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