

Secondary glazing

The low-cost alternative to double glazing

Approximately 10% of the total heat loss from a typical house is through the windows. A further 15% of heat loss is 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 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 secondary glazing

The simplest and cheapest form of secondary glazing is thin transparent plastic film which you install yourself using strips of double-sided sticky tape. The material looks like 'cling-film', but if fitted properly it's wrinkle-free and almost invisible. To install, apply the tape to the frame of the window, cut the film to size and attach it 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.

Temporary secondary glazing

Next up, in terms of expense, complexity and permanence, is the option to fit a sheet of rigid and transparent material like clear acrylic plastic or clear polystyrene to the window



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

frame in such a way that it can be put up or taken down as the season requires. Some systems use magnetic 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.

A 3mm sheet of acrylic of around 150x100 cm costs upwards of £70 plus VAT.

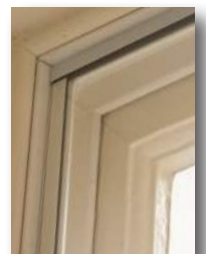
This type of secondary glazing also helps reduce noise.



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.

The savings from this type of secondary glazing are on average: £121 a year for a detached house, £65 for a semi, £82 for a mid-terrace house, and £44 for a mid-floor flat



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? Check the energy label 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 just 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.



New computer?

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



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