



the brain injury association
Central Lancashire

Keeping warm and comfortable during cold weather

Keep your body warm

Freezing temperatures and cold weather conditions can have a negative impact on our health. People with respiratory problems such as asthma, or heart conditions are at particular risk during the winter months. Our bodies need to be kept at a core body temperature of 37C to stay healthy, which means rooms should be heated to a minimum of 18C.

There are many ways you can maintain your core body temperature and stay warm in winter and periods of cold weather, without turning the central heating on. Try these tips:

Layer up your warmest indoor clothing

Wearing lots of layers rather than one thick piece of clothing will help trap your body heat and keep you warmer.

- Choose clothes made with insulating material, like wool jumpers and thermal underwear, which are best for keeping you warm at home.
- Using a hot water bottle is also an inexpensive way to stay warmer for longer. You can also keep your feet warm with thick socks and slippers.

Food and drink

Eating healthily and drinking plenty of hot drinks throughout the day will help with staying warm at home.

Avoid alcohol - it prevents your blood vessels from constricting and you'll begin to lose body heat.

Move around

It's important to avoid sitting still for long periods of time - move around and keep as active as possible. This will help boost your circulation and keep you warm.

Keep your feet and hands warm

They might not be the first thing you think of, but if you want to stay nice and toasty this winter, it's important you know how to keep your feet and hands warm.

When it gets cold, your body works harder to keep blood flowing to your core and vital organs to keep them warm. This can change the blood flow to your hands and feet, meaning they may get cold. Keeping your fingers and toes snug can help regulate your body temperature, so make sure not to ignore them.

How to keep your feet warm

- Wearing thick socks and slippers when indoors will help trap the heat and keep your feet toasty.
- If you're outside, wear warm socks and shoes that are completely waterproof.

How to keep your hands warm

- Wearing gloves made of insulating materials, like wool or leather, will help keep your hands warm.
- Use winter warmer packs like hand warmers. These work best when tucked into gloves or clothing.

Keep your house warm

Heating one room during the day is a cost-effective way to keep your house warm and your energy bill down. Here are a few ways to keep a room warm without using central heating.

Curtains

- Open your curtains during the day - the sun still provides warmth even in the winter months. Make sure you close them as soon as the sun sets to keep the warm air in.
- Investing in thicker curtains, or thermal curtain liners, will help keep the cold air out and prevent heat loss.

Use a draught excluder

We tend to lose a lot of heat through gaps around windows and doors. Reduce draughts by lining your windows with rubber seals and use a homemade draught excluder by doors - this could even be an old towel, tightly rolled.

Move furniture away from external walls

Sitting with your back against an internal wall will instantly feel a lot warmer.

Avoid condensation on windows

- With the windows closed, condensation can quickly build and can eventually turn to mould. This can be harmful to your lungs.
- Make sure you turn extractor fans on in the bathroom and kitchen.
- Wipe down windows at regular intervals.

Staying warm at night

Temperatures plummet when it gets dark, so in winter it's important to know how to keep your bedroom as warm as possible at night.

- Keep rooms insulated: As with any room, exclude any draughts, close the windows when it's cold. Put down rugs to insulate the floor.
- Bedding: Staying warm in bed is vital for us all in winter. Use extra blankets, or buy flannel or fleece bedding if you can. These materials are the warmest bedding options, as they trap body heat and are better insulators than cotton. Using thicker tog duvets will also provide additional warmth.
- Electric or weighted blankets: An electric blanket is a lot cheaper to run than a heater and provides a constant source of heat throughout the night. Weighted blankets are also very comforting and help you stay warm as they don't let chilly air into the bed.
- Toasty pyjamas: Wearing warm clothes in winter isn't just for daytime. At night, wearing fleece or flannel pyjamas will go a long way to keeping you warm as they trap the heat. Don't forget your feet either. Bed socks will keep your feet warm and help you sleep.
- Hot water bottle: Cost effective and long lasting, a hot water bottle will provide a safe source of warmth throughout the night.

Find a warm space

As temperatures plummet, many organisations across the country are creating warm hubs. These spaces offer warm food and drink, heating and a place to meet others.

Warm Welcome has 3,000 registered hubs across the UK, offering welcoming spaces to the public. You can find one near you, <https://www.warmwelcome.uk/find-a-space#map>

Get help with your energy bill

If you're claiming benefits such as Pension Credit, Disability Allowance, Income Support, Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit or Support for Mortgage Interest, you may be able to get help with paying for energy including your electric bill.

- Warm Home Discount scheme: The UK government run scheme is available to those receiving benefits or a low income, you can check if you're eligible on their website.
- Cold Weather payment: These are given to people receiving benefits in England and Wales when there is an extended period of freezing weather. See if you're eligible for support.
- Contact your gas or electricity supplier: Find out what support you could receive from your gas and electricity supplier by contacting them directly.
- Winter fuel payment: Those born before 23rd September 1958 may be eligible to receive support to pay their heating bill.
- You can also contact Energy Savings Trusts, Citizens Advice Bureau and National Energy Action for simple energy advice on how you can save energy, make your home more efficient, and reduce bills.