

Self-help Guide

Storage Heaters



What are storage heaters and how do they work?

Most storage heaters are wall-mounted and look a bit like radiators. The easiest way to understand them is to visualise them as a big rechargeable battery - they require charging before they can discharge the energy contained within them. Storage heating works by storing up heat (ideally during the cheapest electricity tariff period at night) and then gradually releasing heat throughout the day.

If you charge the storage heater during the middle of the day, you will be charged the peak electricity rate and this can quickly become expensive.

How to use your storage heater

Storage heater controls are normally found on the top of the heater, sometimes under a flap. Once you have found the right settings to keep you comfortably warm, you shouldn't need to change the controls unless the weather changes.

Make sure your electricity provider knows you have storage heaters so they can make sure you are on the correct tariff.

Most storage heaters have two key controls:

- Power switches – this determines whether you are using off-peak or peak electricity to charge the storage heater (remember that off-peak is considerably cheaper!).
- Input and output controls
- Input: this controls the amount of heat stored during off-peak hours. This has the biggest impact on the running costs of your electric storage heating.
- Output: this controls the rate at which the storage heater emits heat into the room.

To use storage heaters in the most effective (and cheapest) way, make sure you don't use the peak electricity power switch unless it's absolutely necessary.

Obviously, you don't want to get cold, but try to avoid using this unless it's the middle of the winter and you really need a heating boost. The idea is to make sure the storage heater only charges during off-peak hours.

During the winter you will want to set the input control to the maximum at night – this will allow the most charging power to the storage heater.

In the summer you may get away with turning the input control right down (or even off), since you won't need much heat for your home.

Make sure you turn the output to zero when you are not at home or when you go to bed. There is no point releasing the heat as the storage heater charges as it won't have any charge for when you need it – instead it will function more as an electric radiator.

How to make the most of our your storage heater - example

In winter, a couple are in their home for most of the day. They want their storage heaters to charge fully at night, so they set the input to six and the output to one or off.

In the morning, to warm the house up, they turn the output to four. Once the house is warm, they turn it down to two and in the evening, when it becomes chillier, they turn it up to five or six to use the remaining heat stored.

During the summer, they will be out for most of the day. Because the weather is warmer, they only want a bit of heat for the evening.

They set the input to three overnight and the output to off. In the morning they keep the output off as the room is warm enough. When they come back in the evening, they turn the output to three or four, giving them some background heat until bedtime.