

Loft insulation

Do you have enough loft insulation? Use this ruler to find out

27cm

Congratulations – you've got the recommended level of loft insulation.

Did you know that up to a quarter of the heat in your home could be escaping through your roof? That's heat that you have already paid for, so it makes sense to keep it inside where it belongs.



Installing loft insulation is one of the most cost effective ways to stop wasting energy and it's easy to install too. It will reduce heat loss year after year, paying for itself many times over. It also helps to create an even temperature in your home, keeping you warmer for less. It's also good for the environment as it cuts down your carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions – the biggest contributor towards climate change.

Here's a quick breakdown of the numbers:

Remember

Even if you have loft insulation, it might need topping up for you to get the full benefit. By increasing your insulation depth from 5cm to the recommended 27cm, you could save around £35 a year on your heating bills.

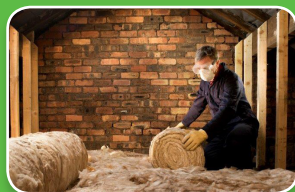
The right material

Loft insulation is a good idea if your home has an accessible loft with no damp or condensation problems. Insulation is laid between and over the ceiling joists.

Insulating material acts as a barrier and stops the warmth in your house escaping through the roof.

12cm

You need to top up with 15cm thick insulation for maximum energy and money savings.



There are three main types of loft insulation:

Quilts

Mineral wool and natural wool are the most straightforward and common materials used to insulate accessible lofts.



Blown insulation

Mineral wool or cellulose can be used both for lofts with normal and with difficult access. In a normal loft the areas to be insulated must be sectioned off to prevent the insulation blowing everywhere.



Insulation boards

Expanded/extruded polystyrene (EPS/EXPS) and foam products (PUR/PIR) can be used for flat roofs and lofts which require a hard surface for storage space.

7cm

You need to top up with 20cm thick insulation for maximum energy and money savings.



Want to use your loft as a storage area?

You can raise the level of the floor and insulate to the recommended depth or use insulation boards on the roof between the rafters.



Have a loft conversion?

Boards backed with insulation can be cut to fit snugly between the rafters to insulate a pitched roof to keep your loft conversion cosy too.



Have a flat roof?

Insulation can be installed on top of a flat roof or below it. Not only will it keep your home warm, but it also cuts down on the risk of condensation too. Flat roof insulation tends to be a bit more expensive and more complicated to install than a pitched roof so it's best to leave it to the professionals.

Can I do it myself?

Blown insulation should only be installed by professionals, but if you're a dab hand at DIY and have a standard loft with no issues, you can fit insulation quilts and boards yourself. Insulating your loft needs to be done to a high standard though, so get that DIY manual out. And remember to wear protective clothing, gloves and a mask.

Don't forget to insulate your pipes, water tank and loft hatch too. Insulating your loft will keep your house warmer but make the roof space above colder. Without their own insulation, pipes and tanks could freeze and an uninsulated loft hatch could let cold draughts into your house. However, don't insulate underneath your water tank, because this can cause your water to freeze.



Where to start?

There are lots of insulation brands and products on the market but you can spot the best products by looking for the Energy Saving Trust Recommended logo. These have to meet strict criteria, set by an independent panel and reviewed every year—so you can be sure you're buying the best products available.



Choosing a professional

Using a professional installer makes insulating your loft even simpler. It will typically take a professional just a couple of hours to insulate the loft of a three bedroom semi-detached house. Don't worry about having to deal with any mess either, as reputable installers will clean up after themselves.

A professional installation costs around £300 but it may be possible to get grants and offers to reduce the costs.


ECO (the Energy Company Obligation) requires larger energy suppliers to provide funding towards energy efficiency improvements in domestic households in Great Britain. These improvements include loft, cavity wall and solid wall insulation. Some of the funding is specifically directed at people on certain benefits, and can support heating system improvements.

Find out what grants and offers are available in your area at energysavingtrust.org.uk or call a friendly advisor at the **Energy Saving Advice Service on 0300 123 1234 (England and Wales)**.

If you live in Scotland, you can contact **Home Energy Scotland on 0808 808 2282**.



Find an installer

If you decide to get a professional installation done, check the installer's identification. 

A registered installer should be a member of at least one of these organisations:

National Insulation Association (NIA)
nationalinsulationassociation.org.uk 

The British Rigid Urethane Foam Manufacturers Association (BRUFMA)
brufma.co.uk 

Make sure the installer has signed up to the NIA Code of Professional Practice. This guarantees that they have insurance cover and follow strict customer care and health and safety guidelines

Remember to make sure your loft is ventilated.

This will stop condensation forming so damp won't be a problem. A professional installer will leave adequate space at the eaves of the roof for ventilation. You will need to do this too if you are doing it yourself.

If you have an existing damp or condensation problem, then you should get professional advice about fixing this before insulating.