

Central heating controls

Getting the hang of how to control your central heating and hot water can be a bit confusing.

There are room thermostats and thermostatic radiator valves, timeclocks and programmers, and then the big debate about whether you leave it on all day or set it to come on at set times.

1. **Room thermostats**
 - a. **Mechanical thermostat**
 - b. **Electronic programmable room thermostat**
2. **Programmers**
 - a. **Digital programmer**
 - b. **Timeclock programmer**
3. **What temperature should I set my room thermostat to?**
4. **When should I have my heating on?**
5. **Thermostatic radiator valves**
6. **Bleeding a radiator**
7. **Things to check if your gas heating is not working**

1. Room thermostats

A room thermostat controls the temperature of your whole home based on the temperature of the air around it.

You'll usually find it in your hallway or lounge.

When the air is warm enough, the thermostat sends a signal to the central heating pump and boiler to stop sending hot water around the system. Your radiators will then cool down.

When the air then cools, the thermostat sends another signal to the system to start pumping hot water to your radiators again. At different times throughout the day, your radiators will feel cooler and warmer to keep the temperature constant.

1.a. Mechanical thermostat

This has a dial with a range of temperatures on it. Turn the dial so that the arrow or marker is against the temperature setting you want. If you turn the dial you may be able to hear a click when the setting passes the actual room temperature. If you are turning the setting up the click will start the system to heat the temperature to the new setting. If you are turning it down then the click will turn the system off.



1.b. Electronic programmable room thermostat

This controls both the temperature of your home and the timing of your heating and hot water.



2. Programmers

A programmer controls the time when your heating is on. Some control your heating and hot water and some just the heating.

2.a. Digital programmer

If you have had a new boiler in the last few years, you will probably have a digital programmer to set the times your central heating turns on. This is usually found in your airing cupboard.



2.b. Timeclock programmer

Timeclock programmers have a clock with either sets of pins or arrows to set the programme. It will look something like this.

Pins: If the timer has pins, push them in against the time you want the heating to come on and pull them out against the time you want the heating to go off.

Arrows: If the timer has arrows, slide the 'on' arrows round the clock to the times when you want the heating to come on and slide the 'off' arrows round to the times when you want the heating to go off

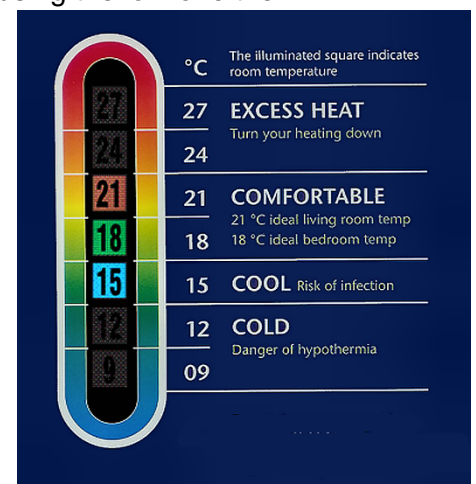


Then set the switch to 'timer' or 'auto' depending on the timer you have and this will automatically turn the heating and hot water on and off at times that you set.

You can override the automatic settings with the 'on' and 'off' switches/buttons. By using the 'on' switch you turn the system on and it will not automatically turn off. By using the 'off' one the system is turned off with no automatic time to start again.

3. What temperature should I set my room thermostat to?

It depends on you and your situation. For most people a temperature of 18°-21°C (66°-70°F) is the recommended level to keep you warm and healthy. If you're older or have a disability you may need to set your room thermostat to between 21°-23°C (70°-73°F) to make it a bit warmer. Remember that the room thermostat may not be spot on – so use it as a guide only.



4. When should I have my heating on?

It really depends on you and your lifestyle.

For some of you it will be cheaper to leave your heating on all the time and turn it up and down with the room thermostat. This is what our surveyors recommend.

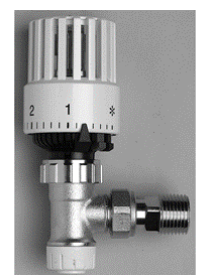
They suggest that when you go out or go to bed you turn it down to 15 degrees centigrade and then turn it up to 18 – 21 degrees when you get in or get up. This also helps to keep away damp and mould caused by condensation as your home never gets really cold.

If you want to programme your heating it's best to set it to come on about half an hour before you want your home warm, and to go off about half an hour before you go out or go to bed. In very cold weather it will take longer to heat your home so set the heating to come on earlier, rather than turn the thermostat up.

5. Thermostatic radiator valves

Some radiators are fitted with thermostatic valves that help to regulate the heat in a room. These have a dial with numbers on. If you have these, it's best to set them to a middle setting and see if the room is warm enough. If the room is too warm, turn them down by 1, if the room is too cold, turn them up by 1. It's not a good idea to turn them fully ON or fully OFF to make the room you are in warmer or cooler as this will waste fuel. Turn it a little way and let it do the work.

Be aware if you have thermostatic radiator valves fitted in your home and you have a room thermostat. Very occasionally, the radiators don't warm up to their full extent as the central room thermostat turns the system off before they are fully warm. Generally, this isn't a problem as the home is still warm.

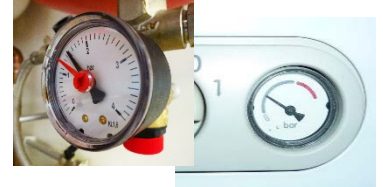


6. Bleeding a radiator

If a radiator doesn't warm up it may need bleeding. Radiators can trap air that will prevent them getting hot, especially if they have been turned off for a long time during the summer. If the radiator feels cool at the top it probably needs air releasing from it. The action needed on this depends on the type of boiler you have.

6.a. If you have a new condensing boiler

On pressurised systems, where the boiler has a pressure gauge, please do not bleed the radiator but contact us as it may mean that the system needs to be re-pressurised.



6.b. Other boilers

Turn off the heating system before you start. To bleed a radiator use a radiator key (if you don't have one they are cheap and available from most DIY stores) and slowly open the valve to let out the air. The valve is found at the top of the radiator. Turn the bleed key anticlockwise through half a turn to open the valve. You will hear a hissing sound as the trapped air escapes the system. Shut off the valve when water begins to dribble, by retightening the key half a clockwise turn and check it is fully closed.



Take care not to unscrew the valve completely as the plug will come right out and cause a flood.

7. If your gas central heating is not working

Carry out the following simple checks before contacting us:

- Do you have enough credit in the gas and / or electricity meter? If you have run out of credit and have used the emergency credit in either meter then your heating will not work.
- Has the gas supply been cut off?
- Room thermostat (if fitted) – If your home is warmer than the setting on the thermostat the heating won't come on.
- Thermostatic Radiator Valves (if fitted) - If the valves are turned to the * symbol they will not allow radiators to become hot.
- Timer / Programmer - Has this been set correctly?
 - Check you've set it on the 24hr clock
 - Check you've set times for both the heating and hot water (if appropriate)
 - Use the override button to override any timings.
- Has there been a power cut? - When the power is off most central heating boilers will not work.

If the electricity supply is off or has been off for a lengthy period of time the timer / programmer clock may need to be reset using the 24hr clock.

- Has the fused spur which is located by the boiler been switched off (see picture). If it has then the boiler will not work.

