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BAD HABITS BURNING ENERGY AND MONEY

- **30 million (62%) people throwing away precious pounds by leaving electrical items on standby^[1]**
- **Six in ten (59%) leave their set top boxes switched on overnight^[2], while almost half (49%) leave their TV on standby^[3] and more than a quarter (28%) of those with games consoles don't turn them off at the mains when they're not using them^[4]**
- **2.5 million believe switching your item off by remote control means it's off, and 3.5 million think not using an item that's plugged in and turned on doesn't use electricity^[5]**
- **One in ten Brits (9%) don't normally turn the lights off when they leave a room^[6] while over half (52%) leave their mobile phone to charge overnight^[7]**

With energy bills hitting new highs, new research by uSwitch.com, the independent price comparison and switching service, reveals that 30 million of us (62%) are throwing money down the drain by wasting energy^[1]. Almost two thirds (62%) of consumers are leaving their electrical items on standby, using up more electricity and money than needed^[1].

Our biggest culprits are our set top boxes, with almost six in ten people (59%) admitting to at least occasionally leaving it on when not in use, while a quarter (26%) even say they leave it on all the time^[2]. And consumers aren't much better when it comes to other home entertainment - half (50%) leave their TV on standby^[3] and almost three in ten (28%) keep their games console on^[4] when it's not being used.

Shockingly, one in 13 (8%) people believe as long as they don't use an electrical item, it doesn't use electricity even if it is still plugged in and turned on^[5]. Further to this, 5% also think switching an item off by remote control means it's off so won't be using electricity^[5].

Leaving a mobile phone to charge overnight may be easy to do, but once it's fully charged, leaving it plugged in wastes as much energy as watching a week of TV^[8]. However, more than half (53%) of us plug their mobiles in to charge when they go to bed^[7]. Over half (53%) of consumers leaving the lights on when they leave a room^[6].

Kevin Sears, energy efficiency expert at uSwitch.com, comments: "In the face of rising energy bills and our increasing love affair with gadgets, consumers can no longer afford to throw money away by wasting energy. Being more energy efficient is a simple and painless way to cut your bills, which many will be worried about this winter.

"Energy efficiency can start with simple steps such as turning things off when they are not in use or using a standby saver, while using an energy monitor will track your usage and help you understand where your energy goes. The bigger steps, such as insulating your home or installing a new energy efficient boiler are more costly, but arguably deliver a greater return. However before taking these it's worth speaking to your energy supplier to see what advice they can give and to find out whether you would qualify for any financial support to help you with the cost."

For more information visit www.uSwitch.com or call 0800 093 06 07

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Useful tips on how to reduce the amount of energy you use and reduce your bills:

- **Standby** - Turn appliances off, don't keep them on standby.
- **Draughts** - Make sure you don't have any draughts. Seal off your windows and doors.
- **Full load** - If you're using your dishwasher or washing machine make sure you have a full load.
- **30 degrees** - When you are using your washing machine, make sure you have it at thirty degrees.
- **One degree** - Turn your heating down by one degree.
- **Curtains**. Close your curtains when it gets dark to keep heat inside.
- **Boiling water** - Only put as much water as you need in the kettle, so if you're making a cup of tea for one, don't fill it to the top.
- **Light bulbs**. Use energy saving light bulbs.
- **Family** - If you've got a family watch what you're children are doing - they're more likely to leave their appliances on in their bedrooms.

- **Energy grants** - Talk to your energy suppliers or your local energy advisory centre. There's lots of money available for grants and financial help to install energy saving measures.

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Notes to editors:

Research carried out online with the uSwitch.com Consumer Opinion Panel in August 2011 amongst a sample of 1,110 GB adults. Assuming ONS stats, there are 48.3m adults in the UK.

1. When asked 'which of the following do you do when it comes to your electrical items?' 9.7% said 'I always leave items on standby', 52.3% said 'I occasionally leave items on standby', and 37.7% said 'I never leave items on standby'
2. When asked 'do you leave your set top box (e.g. Freeview / Sky Box) on when it's not in use?', of those who have one, 26.2% said 'yes – all of the time', 16.1% said 'yes – most of the time', and 16.8% said 'sometimes / occasionally'
3. When asked 'do you leave your TV on standby?' 13.3% said 'yes – all of the time', 9.4% said 'yes – most of the time', and 26.5% said 'sometimes / occasionally'
4. When asked 'do you turn your games console off at the mains when not in use?' 29.5% said 'yes – all of the time', 8.8% said 'yes – most of the time', and 4.9% said 'sometimes / occasionally'
5. When asked 'which of the following do you believe is true?', 95.6% said 'if there is a red light showing on your TV it means it's on standby', 7.5% said 'as long as you don't use an electrical item, it doesn't use any electricity, even if it is still plugged in and turned on; and 5% said 'switching your item off by remote control means it's off'
6. When asked 'do you turn the lights off when you're not in a room?' 44.2% said 'yes – most of the time', 7.6% said 'sometimes / occasionally', and 1.5% said 'no'
7. When asked 'do you leave your mobile phone to charge overnight?', 7.7% said 'yes, all the time', 10.2% said 'yes, most of the time' and 34.1% said 'sometimes / occasionally'
8. Based on the following: when charging a phone overnight, it will be charged in an hour and then left connected unnecessarily for a further seven hours. The overcharging will use 2 watts an hour for 7 hours when the battery is full, but still connected to the charger. This equates to 5.11KWh. A days typical use of a 32" LCD TV (4 hours a day, 170W TV) uses .69421 KWh. Therefore overcharging is the equivalent of $5.11/0.694121 = 7.36$.

About us:

uSwitch.com is a free, impartial, online and telephone-based comparison and switching service, helping consumers compare prices on gas, electricity, water, heating cover, home telephone, broadband, digital television, mobile phones and personal finance products including mortgages, credit cards, current accounts and insurance. In 2010 uSwitch.com celebrated ten years of saving customers money.

uSwitch.com is the first comparison website to achieve the Plain English Campaign's Internet Crystal Mark, which is recognised as a standard that a website has clear language, is accessible and easy to use, and has been tested on a sample of its users.

uSwitch.com is dedicated to helping consumers save money whether they have internet access or not. It offers a dedicated call centre, manned by uSwitch customer service representatives, as well as a freepost 'Send us your bill' service, whereby customers can post their latest energy bills with their telephone number to FREEPOST USWITCH, to get a free call back from a dedicated customer services representative. The service is also available via fax, email and post. Consumers should fax 0203 214 8417, email CustomerServices@uswitch.com or write to Customer Services, uSwitch.com, Centro 3, 19 Mandela Street, London, NW1 0DU with their postcode and usage details.

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