



SMART THERMOSTATS: ARE THEY ECO FRIENDLY?

Can the latest clever heating control devices really help you save energy – and therefore money, too?

Yvette Murrell investigates

Picture this: you're sitting on the bus after a long day at work, it's pouring with rain, and all you can think about is getting home. But will it be warm? With the notorious British weather, you may not have set the timer for your heating to come on before you get back. Luckily, with a smart thermostat, you can adjust it directly from your smartphone wherever you are.

Now, I know what you're thinking: as nice as this sounds, it really would only be a minor inconvenience to not have your heating on before you get in. Give it half an hour and you could have your feet up and be feeling toasty. Smart thermostats need more to make them worthwhile – which is where I come in, to uncover these little helpers' eco-friendly advantages.

The likes of Tado° claim smart thermostats could reduce energy wastage, with its research suggesting you could save up to 31% on your heating bill. This is down to several factors and actual results vary significantly depending on your daily routine. Having full control of your system from anywhere in the world through your smartphone or tablet is the most obvious benefit – this can help minimise your impact on the environment as well as your bank balance as you won't waste energy. And those with unpredictable or often-changing daily routines, plus the more forgetful among us, will reap the rewards of this feature the

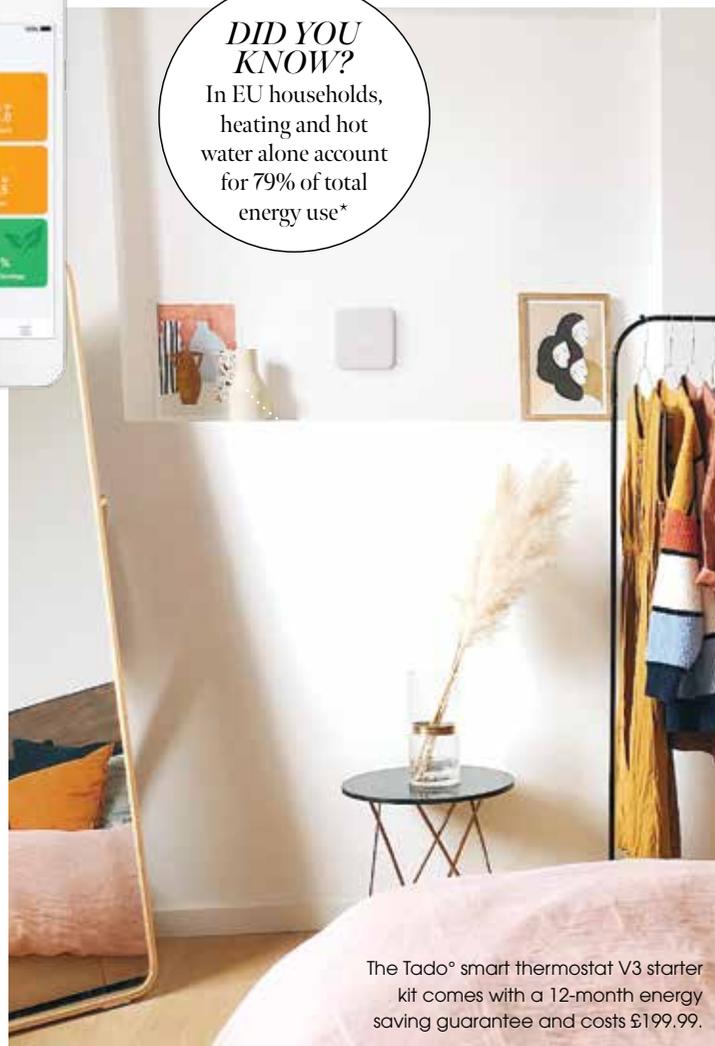


most. On holiday and didn't turn off the heating? No problem. Staying out later than planned? Simply adjust the time your system will start.

But even if you are more regimented, a smart thermostat can still be a worthy investment – even if it takes a little longer to see your energy consumption go down. The majority of devices can also help you identify where and how much you could save based on your usage data, such as when during the day you could turn down your heating a few degrees. Others come with sensors, to be placed around the house, that will continually feed back to your thermostat to adjust your heating. Simply set your preferred temperature and the system will keep your home at a constant level – so you also won't use more energy than necessary. Better yet, models such as the Google Nest Learning thermostat can control the heating by understanding your routine.

DID YOU KNOW?

In EU households, heating and hot water alone account for 79% of total energy use*



The Tado° smart thermostat V3 starter kit comes with a 12-month energy saving guarantee and costs £199.99.

Use it for a week and it learns, for example, that you turn the temperature up by 5°C at 7.30am when you wake up for work and then automatically programs daily timers without you having to do it yourself – that's one less thing to worry about on cold winter mornings. What impressed me the most, though, are smart thermostats using geofencing – a technology that sets a perimeter, in this case around your home, and triggers

a response when a certain action happens. For example, your heating can be set to switch off as soon as you leave the area. Many of these systems are linked to your phone through an app, so use this to detect and switch off when you go out or automatically come back on when you are nearby. Not only does this save energy, it's a warm welcome home – literally. A smart thermostat is surely the way forward to a greener future, no matter your routine. **KBB**

“Smart thermostats could reduce energy wastage and help you save up to 31% on your heating bill.”