

# Boiler Escape Plan

So you've scoped out where your pump might fit in, got a sense of the sound, and turned down your flow temperature. But you aren't keen to replace your boiler right away – maybe it isn't that old, or maybe you want to put off the expenditure and see how things develop. This is all fine! But there are things you can think about doing in the meantime. This is your Boiler Escape Plan. Here are some steps to consider:



**Set yourself a reminder** to think about this again in the future. People's minds often turn to heating in (surprise surprise) the winter. But this is really the worst time to look at replacing your heating system. You need your heat then, and all the heating engineers are busy fixing existing systems. Why not use an online calendar to set an appointment for the 1st of May for ten years. Either consider your options then, or wait until the next time around. (See [pumpchic.com/testdrive](http://pumpchic.com/testdrive) for an appointment you can download.)



**Reduce heat loss.** Heat pumps (like any heating system really) work best when you are losing as little heat from your home as possible. The less heat you lose, the lower the temperature you can operate your pump at, which really helps the efficiency (i.e. heat out for electricity in). So now is the time to think about steps you can take to reduce how much heat your home loses, from simple draught proofing to loft and wall insulation. Search the Energy Saving Trust website for useful guidance.

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**Secondary glazing** is where you fit an extra sheet of plastic or glass over your existing windows, reducing draughts and trapping an insulating layer of air against the cold external window. If you already have good double or triple glazing this isn't for you. But if you have single glazing or poor double glazing, it could make real difference. It is relatively inexpensive, with temporary options in the single digits or tens of pounds. Higher quality versions can rate in the thousands of pounds, but are still significantly cheaper than double glazing. This is also an ideal option for heritage or rental properties, where making permanent changes to the windows may be impossible or undesirable. It's harder to find impartial guidance on secondary glazing, but the detailed guide from Historic England is useful and doesn't only apply to historic buildings.

**Get bigger radiators.** As well as the overall efficiency of your home, another factor that can make a difference is the size of your radiators. With a typical high temperature gas-fired system, the radiators quickly lose a lot of their (high) heat into the room – even if they have a small surface area. Because heat pumps work at a lower temperature, the heat comes out of the radiator more slowly as the water circulates around it. For this reason, the bigger the radiator, the better it is at putting heat into the room. The good news is that bigger radiators are not only better for heat pump systems – they also work better for your gas boiler too. This is because the colder the water is that returns to you boiler from the radiators, the better your boiler is at “condensing” and recovering heat from the boiler’s fire, making it more efficient. So if you’re not ready to get a heat pump yet, why not consider bigger radiators?