

Buyer's guide

# INDOOR heating

WHATEVER YOUR STYLE OF HOME OR ITS LOCATION, THESE SMART HEATING SOLUTIONS WILL HELP YOU BEAT THE CHILL WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK

Words HANNA MARTON

When it comes to heating your home, one size certainly does not fit all. The most suitable system or appliance will depend on the size of your home or the space you want to heat, plus the energy source you wish to heat it with, as well as the aesthetics and, of course, budget. Ready to shop? We've asked the experts and researched the latest offerings to bring you the best options on the market.

In this living room, reworked by Villa Styling Studio, a Jetmaster fireplace takes centre stage.



The Dyson Purifier Hot+Cool Formaldehyde purifying fan heater is a slimline solution.

## HOT OPTIONS

Choosing a heating solution can seem overwhelming, but it does help to break it down into two major categories: central systems and room-only (also known as 'space') heaters.

Central heating warms up your whole home and, depending on the system, may be switched on and off in zones - but installation and running costs can be more expensive than a Kardashian's wardrobe. Options include electric reverse-cycle air-conditioning and hydronic panel or under-floor heating. And the latter usually have to be installed while the home is being built.

Room heating, as the name suggests, aims to warm one room or space. For individual rooms and smaller spaces, reverse-cycle air-conditioning, bioethanol and gas heaters, oil column heaters, portable electric or panel heaters, and combustion wood fires are all on the menu. Heated blankets are another inexpensive but oh-so-snuggly option to select.

Given the rising costs of energy, heating a home doesn't come cheap. Selecting the right heating solution for your climate and the size of the space will help prevent bill shock in the future. Thankfully, there's a host of innovative heaters on the market designed with both efficiency and aesthetics in mind.

Beautiful DESIGN

### HB'S TOP PANEL HEATERS



Nobo NTL4S20-FS40 2000W panel heater, \$750, Appliances Online.



HX65L22 2300W ceramic panel heater, \$549, DeLonghi.



Rinnai PEPH10PEW 1kW panel heater, \$511, Appliances Online.



Noirot Spot Plus 1500W panel heater, \$449, The Good Guys.

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## RADIATING GLORY

If space and money are at a premium, consider a sleek panel heater. These can be portable – on castors, for example – or fixed to the wall for a seamless look. “Panel heaters are a cost-effective, reliable and efficient solution,” says Colin Jones, category expert at Appliances Online. “They have a relatively low running cost, depending on your location and service provider, and are suitable to operate for long periods, in large areas such as a lounge room.”

Some are suitable for bathrooms, too, and the latest models are practically waif-like. “A panel heater, or modern radiator, is a great way to heat a bathroom,” says Lauren Mahoney, creative director and founder of Studio Trio. “Noirot is a brand I have used many times since it’s compact, neat and has minimal projection.” One down side is that panel heaters can take a while to heat up because they radiate heat rather than blow it out via a fan. However, this means they can be gentler on people with allergies.

A close relative to the panel heater is the column heater, which uses electricity to warm up oil inside columns (or fins) and that converts to radiant heat. They’re safe, inexpensive to run and best for small spaces over long periods of time. “Column heaters are easy to use and can be moved from room to room; all you need to do is connect them to a powerpoint,” adds Colin.

*Consistent warmth fills this home by Bloom Interior Design & Decoration, thanks to hydronic panel radiators.*

## FLAME ON

If your home already has a gas connection, a built-in heater with gentle flame can provide you with instant, hygge-inducing warmth. “Gas fireplaces work extremely well at heating large, open-plan areas, making them a great choice for communal spaces,” explains Colin. For optimum thermal efficiency, pair your gas fire with a ceiling fan set to ‘reverse mode’ (that is, spinning clockwise) on low speed – this extracts the cooler air up into the ceiling space while gently pushing the warm air down to the floor, helping to maintain a constant cosy temperature.

Many gas heaters mimic wood fireplaces, replete with faux logs or coals, and they’re becoming increasingly realistic. Some fireplaces, such as the Escea DFS730, can be ignited via mobile app – get it going on your way home from work or a rainy footy match for the warmest welcome you could imagine. Lauren often specifies gas fireplaces for their classic style. “When selecting a firebox, it should be relatively square to suit a mantel surround. Logs inside bring that traditional feel, versus stones.” Firebox-style heaters require a flue to allow the gas to exit your home safely, which adds to the installation and maintenance costs.

Convection heaters are flameless and flueless, inexpensive to run and super effective. A 1-kilowatt unit can warm an area of up to about 10 square metres. And they’re portable (provided built-in gas outlets are available), which means you can take your heater with you if you move house. Keep in mind that in Victoria, you can only purchase an unflued gas space heater if you’re replacing an existing one, and it must run on LPG (versus natural gas).

## ECO-FRIENDLY WARRIORS

If you love the look and feel of a real-flame fireplace, but not the smoke, ash or endless log chopping, a bioethanol-fuelled heater might be what will get your fire going.

“Bioethanol fireplaces don’t require any pipes, flues, chimneys or utility connections, which means they’re easy to install, including in spaces where traditional fireplaces can’t be, such as townhouses and apartments,” says Stephane Thomas, director of the Mad Design Group, which makes EcoSmart Fire bioethanol fireplaces. But are they effective at warming a space? “The heat output of our ethanol fireplaces varies based on the model and size selected but, as a guide, when used indoors they comfortably heat between 20 and 195 square metres. The warmth generated from the open flame is distributed into the room rather than escaping up a flue or chimney, which also boosts fuel efficiency.” >

### HB'S TOP GAS HEATERS



*Rinnai 'Avenger 25' portable gas heater, \$2491, Appliances Online.*



*DFS730 freestanding gas fireplace, \$5999, Escea.*



*Regency GFI750 built-in gas fireplace, from \$4999, Abbey Fireplaces.*



*Omega Altise 'Brigadier' gas convection heater, \$1199, Harvey Norman.*

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*These days, there are plenty of options when it comes to heaters from those fueled by eco-friendly biofuel to those that can be voice-controlled*

Sydney-based interior designer Julieanne Henry recently chose an ethanol-burning fireplace for an elegant harbourside apartment. “It’s clean-burning, looks sleek and the installation is very simple,” says Julieanne. “Bioethanol fireplaces also generate a great amount of heat that stays in the room – just what you need in winter!”

If your love of wood-burning fireplaces can’t be quelled, you’ll be delighted to note that Escea has just released an efficient combustion fireplace featuring direct vent technology – the only one of its kind in Australia. The outside chamber of the dual-flue fireplace draws air from outside, not from the room like other wood burners, to oxygenate the fire. The exhaust from the fire travels out through the central chamber of the flue to the air outside. This means the fireplace is sealed to the room, keeping the indoor air quality pristine and draughts at bay. Look for sustainably sourced firewood and check council regulations before installation.

### MOVEABLE HEAT

Care for an electric heater you can easily move from room to room or even bring to your workplace? What about a heater you can control with your voice? The options for portable heaters are increasingly endless, with smart tech meaning you don’t even need to get off the sofa to turn up the heat.

“Some units also have cooling capabilities, as well as built-in air purifiers with HEPA filters to keep pollutants and allergens at bay,” explains Colin. Others, such as the DeLonghi TCH8993ER tower heater, also harness ceramic technology that adjusts the temperature automatically depending on the temperature in the room. Who knew you could outsource comfort?

You can talk to certain portable heaters, which is great if you’re feeling lonely or can’t peel yourself away from Netflix. The Goldair Smart Wi-Fi ceramic tower heater, for example, can connect to an app on your phone, Amazon Alexa or Google Assistant, meaning you can adjust the heat with the touch of a button or your voice.

### HB'S TOP REAL-FLAME FIRES



*Cocoon Aeris suspended biofuel fire, from \$3795, Abbey Fireplaces.*



*Pop 3L freestanding biofuel fire, from \$1596, EcoSmart Fire.*



*Planika 'Zero Emission Bubble' wall-mounted biofuel fireplace, \$4295, Appliances Online.*



*TFS Series freestanding wood fireplace, from \$4999, Escea.*



*This EcoSmart Fire Pop 8L biofuel gas heater can be taken outside so it doubles as a fire pit.*

### HB'S TOP PORTABLE HEATERS

#### Be efficient

Save money when heating your home with these tips and tricks. **Draught-proof** rooms by sealing gaps around windows and doors. Draught excluders (door snakes), pelmets and heavy curtains will help, too.

**Set the temperature** on your heater as low as possible. The energy usage increases five to 10 per cent for every degree.

**Install a thermostat** away from sources of heat and cooling, such as appliances and windows since this can skew the reading.



*From left: Dyson 'Hot Cool' purifying fan heater, \$999, Myer. Sunbeam 'Feel Perfect' faux fur heated throw, \$159, Domayne. TCH8993ER 2400W ceramic tower heater, \$269, DeLonghi. Goldair Smart Wi-Fi 2400W ceramic tower heater, \$219, Harvey Norman. 100*