



July: Change Your Light Bulbs!

Lighting accounts for about 25% of the average home's electric bill.

Task: Change your most frequently used light bulbs to CFLs (compact fluorescent light bulbs)

An ENERGY STAR qualified compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) will save about \$30 over its lifetime and pay for itself in about 6 months. It uses 75 percent less energy and lasts about 10 times longer than an incandescent bulb.

(www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=find_a_product.showProductGroup&pgw_code=LB)

Advanced: If you've changed all your bulbs, find the biggest energy hog in your home and reduce its impact by changing how you use it or replacing it with a more efficient model. (Tip: check refrigerators, freezers, and clothes dryers! See *What else you can do*, below.)

Tips for using CFLs:

- Choose the right bulb for the job. For tips on making the transition, visit [this site](#). For a slick interactive site with tips for choosing bulbs, try Energy Star's [Choose a Light Guide](#). See an amazing array of choices to purchase at 1000bulbs.com.
- When disposing of CFLs, do not put them in the trash. Take them to the recycling center! CFLs contain a small amount of mercury, and therefore should be handled with care and not deposited in landfills.
- While CFLs do contain mercury, this should not deter you from using them. Consider this: when coal is burned to make electricity, mercury is released into the atmosphere, and returns to us in our air and water. CFLs require less energy, so they result in less mercury in our environment. Assuming they are handled carefully and disposed of responsibly, the mercury in CFLs is contained rather than being released to contaminate our streams, rivers, lakes, and air.
- CFLs last 7 - 10 times as long as incandescent bulbs, and use less energy over their lifetimes – making the higher upfront cost worth it.
- CFLs last longer if they are not turned on and off rapidly. If possible, wait 10 minutes before turning a CFL back on.

What else you can do to save electricity:

- Unplug electronic devices in order to turn them all the way off when not in use. (Anything with a clock, remote control, or standby mode continues to draw current even when turned off – and this “phantom” or “vampire” use can account for 10% of your electricity bill! For convenience, plug several into a power strip and then use the switch on the power strip to turn them all off.
- Use a meter such as a Kill-a-Watt (<http://www.p3international.com/products/special/P4400/P4400-CE.html>) to see how much power a particular appliance uses.