

Compact fluorescent lights

After 122 years of popularity, Thomas Edison's incandescent electric lightbulb is yielding to a more energy-efficient bulb: the compact fluorescent light (CFL). CFLs can last up to 10,000 hours, or 10 times longer than a standard bulb. They consume 75 percent less electricity, saving the average homeowner about \$26 in electricity costs over the bulb's lifetime. CFLs have a high initial cost—starting at about \$8 per bulb—but over five years, you'd pay about \$13 for the equivalent incandescent bulbs. CFLs also produce less "waste heat," thus reducing air-conditioning loads for warmer climates.

CFLs are quiet, flicker-free, and start almost instantly (though they require about 45 seconds to come to full light output). The light quality is on a par with that from a pure white incandescent lightbulb and is comfortable for room lighting, accent lighting, and reading. They require no special wiring or sockets; just unscrew your old incandescent bulb, screw in a new CFL, and start saving kilowatt hours.

Source:

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	Energy used: 25 watts Life: 7,000 hours
	Energy used: 15 watts Life: 10,000 hours
	Energy used: 20 watts Life: 6,000 hours
	Energy used: 3 watts Life: 10,000 hours

desk lamps, and any other lights that will be left on for 3 to 4 hours at a time.

Choosing the right CFL

CFLs are available for most bulb sizes and wattages used in incandescent fixtures. CFL flood lamps, reflectors, dimmable bulbs, bug lights, decor globes, candelabras, and three-way bulbs are direct replacements for their incandescent counterparts. CFL "spiral twist" bulbs—frequently called "twisters"—have excellent light dispersion qualities, making them a good choice for table lamps, floor lamps, and any location that needs wide coverage. For torchères, you must replace the entire fixture.

Choose a CFL that's one-fourth the wattage of your old incandescent bulb; the packaging will also indicate the equivalent incandescent bulb. CFLs are available at home-improvement stores, major hardware stores and light stores, and retailers' Web sites.

— C.W.

Where to use them

Don't use CFLs in unprotected wet or damp locations unless they are UL-rated for wet applications. They're not recommended for totally enclosed fixtures or for fixtures that are turned on and off many times per day—one in a busy bathroom, for instance.

Start by replacing hard-to-reach bulbs such as those in high ceiling fixtures. Next on the replacement list are recessed lights, wall sconces,