



Install Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFLs)

Lighting accounts for almost one-fifth of all the electricity consumed in the United States. Common incandescent bulbs are very inefficient and waste 90 percent of their energy producing heat instead of light. This waste heat contributes to your cooling bill in the summer.

Compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) are one solution. They use one-quarter to one-third of the electricity of common incandescent bulbs and screw them into standard light sockets. CFLs can save 60 percent or more on lighting costs. They're available in a wide range of light output and in a pleasing range of colors.

A CFL will cost about 10 times the price of an incandescent bulb, but it will last about 10 times longer. This makes their long-term purchase cost about the same. The savings on your electric bill will begin immediately.

Start by installing CFLs in the rooms you use the most, like the kitchen, bathroom, and living room. Choose CFLs with a much lower wattage than the incandescent bulbs they replace. For example, replace 100-watt incandescent with 26–30-watt CFLs to get the same light output; replace 75-watt incandescent with 20–23-watt CFLs, and replace 60-watt incandescent with 15–20-watt CFLs. Using the higher wattage CFLs ensures that you won't get complaints about loss of light.

Standard CFLs are slightly larger than incandescent light bulbs and may not fit in all fixtures. The smallest CFLs, called sub-compact fluorescent, may work in these cases. Check your fixtures before purchasing CFLs.

If you're building a home, or plan to replace existing built-in fixtures, look for fixtures that are designed especially for CFLs. Recessed CFL fixtures—those that fit into the ceiling—are an especially good replacement for the recessed incandescent fixtures that allow large amounts of air to leak into the home.