



# Energy-Efficient Lighting: A Bright Idea

The sun. It's the light bulb at the center of our solar system, providing the world with an endless supply of warm, free, golden light.

But when night falls or we venture indoors where the sun can't reach, we rely on a different source of light—electric light from light bulbs. The technical word is lamps.

Most homes today use two types of lamps. **Incandescent** includes the familiar household bulb and many others of varying shapes and sizes, including bright white halogen bulbs. **Fluorescent** includes standard tubes as well as the new compact models which fit into existing sockets for incandescent lamps.

Different as they may be, however, both types of lamps have one thing in common: they need electricity to operate. And electricity costs money.

### What price, light?

The biggest cost of light is not the cost of the bulbs, but the electricity you use to run them—by far. In fact, electricity can account for up to 90% of the total cost of light.

Of course, this means you can reduce your electric bill by turning off unused lights or dimming the ones you do use. But the best way to save money is to use high-efficiency light bulbs whenever possible.

Halogen lamps, for example, are much more energy-efficient than ordinary incandescent lamps. For the same amount of energy, they gener-

ate up to 30% more light.

And fluorescent lamps are even more efficient. They use only one-fifth to one-third the energy of incandescent lamps of the same brightness, and they last 10 to 20 times as long.

Compact fluorescents are an easy choice because they can be used in traditional incandescent lightbulb sockets. While they cost more initially, they last 9–13 times longer than incandescent bulbs and provide an energy savings of approximately 64–82%.

Energy-efficient bulbs have another advantage as well. In addition to saving you money, they also help conserve our natural resources. Because you're using less electricity, the power plant which supplies your energy burns less coal, oil and natural gas.

Here are some tips you can use to save electricity and reduce your energy costs:

- Turn off lights when you're not using them. Make sure your home has enough fixtures so that you can turn on only what you need for such activities as cleaning, reading, entertaining or watching TV.

- Check your incandescent light bulbs and replace any that appear to be turning black. Blackened bulbs are nearing the end of their life cycle, and they use up the same amount of electricity to provide less light.

- Don't be put off by the initial cost of energy-efficient

bulbs such as compact fluorescents. While they generally cost more to buy, they'll more than pay for themselves in saved electricity over the course of their lifetimes.

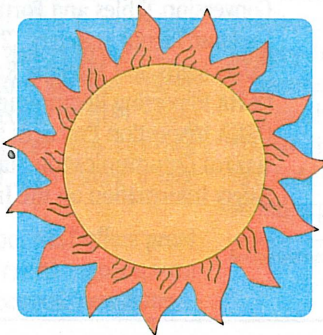
- Three-way bulbs are a great choice for both reading and general lighting. Just remember to keep these versatile lamps on "low" when you're not reading.

- Remember that switching lights on and off will not affect the life of an incandescent lamp. Switching only shortens the life of a fluorescent lamp if done more than once every two or three hours.

- Paint ceilings white, and choose light pastel colors for your interior walls and cabinets. In this way, you can brighten a room without spending a cent on electricity!

Far and away, the biggest cost of light is not in the bulbs you buy, but the electricity you use to run them. That's why energy-efficient lamps make so much sense. See for yourself: saving money and preserving the environment can be easy as, well—changing a light bulb. ■

By Bob Rhode



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