

Improved CFLs

Some households have resisted the purchase of Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs (CFLs), because of the limitations of the technology. Original fluorescent lights were noisy, cast an unpleasant glow and had a penchant for flickering. Today, improvements in technology have made CFLs a much more attractive lighting option.

Newer CFLs turn on instantly, with no flickering. The end of flickering also means an end to headaches and eye-strain commonly caused by earlier CFL lights. The price has gone down, especially when compared with electricity costs.

Color is also not the issue it once was. An important improvement to CFLs has been the changes in the bulbs' coatings, which directly impact the light intensity and color they give to a room. If you like a warmer color of light, this can be achieved through the purchase and installation of CFLs around 2700K (K or Kelvin is a measurement of color temperature). Warmer lighting is considered more flattering to skin tones and clothing. There is also a new daylight CFL bulb which is labeled 5000K. This is considered cooler light with a blue-green hue that simulates the light the earth receives from the sun at noon. It is popular as a reading light and for other close work.

CFLs also come in a variety of sizes, and now can be used in almost any lamp for a variety of purposes. A three watt CFL can be inserted into a light fixture designed to illuminate a painting. A large 125 watt CFL can be used in industry and in home workshops. And CFLs come in many sizes in between. They are available in a variety of shapes as well, rather than the highly recognizable corkscrew bulb.



When it's time to replace bulbs, non-broken CFLs can be recycled at Home Depot stores. Bulbs simply need to be placed in a plastic bag and dropped in the orange recycling containers. They are disposed of in an environmentally-friendly process.

Broken bulbs should be swept up and placed in a sealed plastic bag. They should not be vacuumed. If there are no recycling options, bulbs can be placed in double plastic bags and put into the trash.

According to the EPA, if every American home replaced five of their most frequently used light fixtures or the bulbs in them with CFLs that have earned the Energy Star label, the U.S. would save almost \$8 billion a year in energy costs.