

Bright ideas

Cents-smart lighting

Want a simple way to decrease your electric bills? Increase your home's lighting efficiency. For instance, replacing 25 percent of the incandescent lights with fluorescents in high-use areas can half the amount of energy used for lighting. The following hints shed more light on the subject:

Indoors

- During daylight hours, a single skylight or well-positioned window can provide as much light as dozens of light bulbs. Rearrange your rooms — for example, move your favorite reading chair over by a south window — to take advantage of natural lighting. Hang light-colored, loose-weave curtains to allow daylight to penetrate while preserving privacy. Decorate with light colors that reflect daylight.
- However, in planning for natural lighting, keep in mind that too much glass area on east or west walls or on a south-facing roof can increase your air conditioning needs. Balance passive solar heating, daylighting and cooling considerations.
- Use task lighting. Focus light just where you need it, instead of brightly lighting an entire room. Use lamps or install track or recessed lights to illuminate your desk or sewing table, and keep the ceiling lights off.
- Three-way lamps make it easier to keep lighting levels low when brighter light isn't needed.
- Turn off the lights in any room you're not using. Consider installing timers, photo cells or occupancy sensors.
- Compact fluorescent bulbs are four times more energy efficient than incandescent bulbs and provide the same lighting. Use CFLs in all the portable table and floor lights in your home.
- Halogen lamps generate excessive heat that can create fire hazards. Use compact fluorescent lamps in your torchiere fixtures. They're safer and use much less energy.

Outdoors

- Use outdoor lights with a photocell unit or a timer so they'll turn off during the day.

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national award

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- Exterior lighting is one of the best places to use CFLs because of their long life.

Source: The U. S. Dept. of Energy. For additional information about saving energy, visit the Department's Web site at www.eren.doe.gov/consumerinfo/energy_savers 

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