

Energy saving light bulb myth buster

Why use them?

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) use 80% less electricity, save you about £2.50 a year each, and last up to 12 times longer than old fashioned tungsten bulbs.

What are they?

Think of them as compact versions of the strip lights in work places since the 1950s.

Have they improved?

You can now get all shapes and sizes, fittings and levels of brightness, including 150W equivalent and dimmable options. A recent test of 761 shoppers, found that 64% preferred the light from them.

Is it better to leave them running?

No, switching them on uses the equivalent electricity as leaving them on for a few minutes. Most now light instantaneously.

How should I dispose of them?

Use the service for the safe disposal of fluorescent tubes provided by your local waste and recycling centre.

Is mercury an issue?

Ironically, installing CFLs ought to help reduce the need for coal-fired electricity production - a major cause of global mercury emissions. CFLs contain mercury - about 5mg. Locked into its tube, this is harmless.

What should I do if I smash one?

Ventilate the room for 15 minutes. Put on your rubber gloves, brush the bits into a bag, seal it and drop it at your local waste and recycling centre next time you visit.

Are tungsten bulbs banned?

No. Manufacturers have agreed to withdraw them for sale, starting with 100W in 2009, 60W in 2010 and 40W in 2011.

Where can I find out more?

Contact the Energy Saving Trust on **0800 512 012**.

Energy saving light bulbs are now available in various shapes and sizes



Notes for editors:

1. This article was produced by United Sustainable Energy Agency (USEA). This organisation was created by the merger of Milton Keynes Energy Agency & Thames Valley Energy Centre in May 2008.

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2. USEA works in partnership with local authorities throughout Bucks, Berks, Beds, Herts, Oxon, Hants and the Isle of Wight. USEA was recently awarded a new contract with the Energy Saving Trust (a not-for-profit organisation funded by Central Government and the private sector) to operate an Energy Saving Trust advice centre for the South East. The centre provides impartial energy saving advice to the residents of Bucks, Berks, Oxon, Hants and the Isle of Wight. USEA also offers a free insulation price comparison service called Cocoon.
3. For more information on the test involving shoppers mentioned in the article, visit:

<http://crave.cnet.co.uk/greentech/0,250000598,10001096,00.htm>
4. The information contained within this article is correct to the best of our knowledge, but is subject to change. USEA cannot in any way be held legally responsible for any advice given or any work carried out as a result of this information.