

## Day 3: Replace your incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.

How many light bulbs does it take to change the world?

The US government's Energy Star program says that if every household in the nation replaced ONE incandescent light with a compact fluorescent (hereafter "CFs") bulb, it would prevent enough pollution to equal removing one MILLION automobiles from the roads.

CFs use 66% less energy than standard incandescent bulbs, and last as much as ten times longer. But they give as much light as incandescent bulbs. (I have compact fluorescent bulbs that I installed in the year 2000 that are still working.)

CFs are cool to the touch, because they are not wasting energy making heat.

Light energy is measured in "lumens", and the package of the CF bulb will say how many lumens it produces. A 100 watt incandescent is generally about 1600 lumens. A 60 watt incandescent is about 800 lumens. A CF bulb that produces 1600 lumens, the equivalent of a 100 watt bulb, will only burn about 22-25 Watts of electricity (the 100 watt incandescent is burning 100 watts). So figure a 75% reduction in energy use for lighting when you switch to CF bulbs.

You can get a variety of shades of white in the light produced by CFs:

Warm white -- 2700 Kelvin) very similar to incandescent bulb light,

Soft white -- 3500 K, yellowish-white light,

Cool white -- 4100 K, more pure white

Daylight -- 6400 K, slightly bluish-white

The Kelvin scale is used to describe the colors of light. The higher the number, the "cooler" the light (that is, the more it is shaded with blue).

(Source: Wikipedia)

The bulbs do contain a minute amount of mercury, but they also reduce the amount of mercury emitted into the atmosphere by coal generating plants. I have had a few CFs go out on me, if you call the City's information number (311) they will arrange to pick up your used CFs from your home.

If you have no experience with CFs, I suggest that you buy a variety of bulbs with different color shades to their lights, and decide what works best for you. Generally I like

the small "spiral" bulbs that have a blue-ish white light, but in my office, I have a brighter, more yellow light.

If you don't find something you like at a local store, there is a very large array of CFLs available on the internet, including colors (red, green, pink, yellow) and black-lights.

People sometimes say, "Don't use them in places where you turn the light on and off a lot, such as your closets." We use them everywhere, however, including our closets, and they work just fine. We also use them outside, although there is one caveat about that: In cold weather they take longer to warm up.

How many light bulbs does it take to change your world?

More info on sustainability may be found at:

[www.bettertimesinfo.org](http://www.bettertimesinfo.org)

[www.energyconservationinfo.org](http://www.energyconservationinfo.org)

[www.bobwaldrop.net](http://www.bobwaldrop.net)