

*Sustainability Tip #5:*

# Lighting



Lighting accounts for 5 to 10 percent of the average household's energy budget. While that may not amount to much energy on the individual level, it's a substantial amount all together. Luckily, there is great potential for energy savings in the home and in dorm rooms. If every household in the United States switched to energy-efficient lighting in a single room, we could shut down 20 fossil fuel-fired power plants, which, in turn, would keep one trillion pounds of heat-trapping gases out of the atmosphere. Here are some simple ways in which you can save energy (and money) in your room:

1. Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), which use one-quarter to one-third of the energy (wattage) to provide the same amount of light. CFLs provide light that is aesthetically comparable to incandescent bulbs, but last up to 10 times longer, saving users money over the long term despite the higher purchase price. If you can replace only a few lights at first, choose those that are used most often, because they will reap the greatest benefits. **CFLs are also more energy-efficient and safer than halogen bulbs, which generate excessive heat.** CFLs are designed to fit into standard fixtures, and there are accessories (such as socket extenders) available to address most specialized lighting needs. Since they rarely have to be changed, CFLs are particularly good for hard-to-reach spots.
2. Rely on natural light to meet your illumination needs wherever possible. Even an overcast sky can provide more than enough light if your room is designed to take advantage of it. If not, you can position desks, workspaces and reading areas near windows. Control glare with light curtains, shades, and blinds.
3. Perform simple maintenance tasks to retain lighting efficiency. Since dirt interferes with illumination, dust your bulbs and fixtures.
4. Use only the lights you need. Many tasks do not require a lot of illumination. Cooking, for instance, requires much less than reading. If you make the lighting for different areas of your home task-appropriate, you'll save both energy and money.

Contrary to popular belief, turning lights off and on does not result in greater energy use than leaving them on; in fact, it's quite the opposite.