

Using less energy to light your home

Lightening the load: The case for low energy lightbulbs.



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Home energy use and climate change, what's the connection?

I'm writing this article for all those people who haven't yet got any low energy light bulbs in their homes. Since this is one of the easiest, cost and carbon -effective first steps to take as a carbon watcher, I'm surprised by how few people I know seem to have taken it. I am therefore becoming a bit of a sales rep for low energy bulbs which I have started to buy up and distribute to friends and family as a way of off setting my carbon emissions from driving the car. So why am I persuaded that it makes a difference?

The excellent [Energy Savings Trust website](http://www.energysavingstrust.org) tells us that just over a quarter of the UK's carbon dioxide emissions every year originate from the energy we use to heat and light our homes, and run an increasing number of household appliances.

Someone somewhere has estimated that if every household in the UK used one energy efficient light bulb, we could close down a power station. Even if this can not be proven, the principle of doing something rather than nothing to reduce energy consumption must be a step in the right direction.

Technologists on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reckon that energy-efficient technologies including low energy light bulbs could reduce energy consumption by 20-50 per cent in most sectors of the

economy.

Switching over is cheap and easy

There has never been a better time to switch over to low energy lighting. Many councils will provide a couple of low energy bulbs for free though, unbelievably, few people seem to be taking up this offer.

Thanks to funding from British Gas and development by the Lighting Association, independent retailers can now sell energy efficient lightbulbs for just over £2. plus VAT - less than a third of their normal price. This would give a payback to the customer of less than 6 months. (Source: The Energy Savings Trust)

In most homes, lighting accounts for 10 - 15% of the electricity bill, with UK households annually spending £1.2 billion on lighting. Every energy efficient bulb will save around £7 a year and yet UK households currently have, on average, only 2 efficient bulbs each.

By being energy efficient we can reduce our energy needs and reduce our contribution to climate change. (Source: The Energy Savings Trust)

Where to buy

LOW ENERGY LIGHT BULBS ARE AVAILABLE AT DISCOUNT PRICES MAIL ORDER FROM THE FOLLOWING SCHEMES:

ScottishPower Low Energy Light Bulb Scheme

Discounted low energy light bulbs are available via mail order direct from ScottishPower. This scheme can provide low energy light bulbs as follows:

2 x 20W bulbs for £4.70 OR 2 x 16W bulbs for £6.00 OR 2 x 18W bulbs for £5.20

Maximum 3 packs in any combination.

For a free leaflet on this scheme contact ScottishPower on 0845 602 3876 or access their web site at

www.scottishpower.co.uk/bulbs

Npower Low Energy Light Bulb Scheme

Discounted low energy light bulbs are available via mail order direct from Npower. This scheme can provide low energy light bulbs as follows:

4 pack for £8.00 as follows - 2 x 20W bulbs and 2 x 15W bulbs

6 pack for £11.50 as follows - 3 x 20W bulbs and 3 x 15W bulbs

For a free leaflet on this scheme contact Npower at www.npower.com or write to:

Npower, Low energy light bulb offer, Freepost SEA2385, Ashford, Kent, TN23 6BR

Powergen Low Energy Light Bulb Scheme

Discounted low energy light bulbs are available via mail order direct from Powergen. This scheme can provide low energy light bulbs as follows:

4 pack of bulbs for £6.00 OR 1 x Vario dimming low energy light bulb and 3 x low energy bulbs for £15.00

For a free leaflet on this scheme contact Powergen on 0870 878 0349 or access their web site at www.pgen.com

(Source Easington District Council)

Buying in bulk online can also prove cheaper. Check out the deals on these links and others using a search engine.

<http://www.bltdirect.co.uk/>

http://www.greenshop.co.uk/acatalog/index.html?http%3A//www.greenshop.co.uk/acatalog/Low_Energy_Light_Bulbs.html&CatalogBody

Interested in the Technology?

The following is taken from The National Energy Foundation website.

Energy Efficiency Recommended light bulbs work in the same way as fluorescent strip lights. An electric current is passed through gas in a tube, making the tube's coating glow brightly. Traditional filament bulbs waste a lot of their energy by turning it into unnecessary heat.

Not only do they cost less to light, but also energy efficient bulbs last up to 12 times longer than ordinary light bulbs, so you don't have to change them as often!

What wattage bulb should I buy?

Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFL) are sold by the wattage, in much the same way as normal bulbs. However because they use a lot less energy, a lower wattage bulb will be needed to give out the same amount of light. The table below gives the approximate equivalents that can be used:

Ordinary Bulbs CFLs

40W 7 - 10W

60W 15 - 18W

100W 20 - 25W

150W 32W

Should I leave low energy bulbs on when I leave a room to keep saving money?

No! There used to be a general belief that because fluorescent strip lights used more power in their warm-up phase, then it was better to leave them on all the time. This was never true - an old style strip light (or non-electronic CFL) only uses as much energy in the warm-up phase as it does whilst operating for a minute or so, and modern electronic ballast CFLs use even less energy at the start. Although CFLs do not use much electricity it is still best to keep them switched off when not wanted - why throw money away on anything that not needed?

(Source: National Energy Foundation)

Author: Susan Ballard

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