

Compact Fluorescent Lamps (or Energy Saving Light Bulbs) FAQ

When will the price of CFLs reduce?

CFLs lamps are more expensive than incandescent lamps because they are more expensive to produce (these lamps have integrated ballasts). The price of a CFL however has decreased recently. This is great value when you consider a consumer can save around £100 over the life just by replacing a 100w incandescent with a 20watt CFL.

How much will I save using a CFL lamp over its lifetime?

A typical CFL can offer a saving of up to £8 per year on average when compared to a standard incandescent lamp. A six-year-life rated energy-saving bulb would therefore save about £100 during its lifetime. (100W incandescent compared to 20W CFL) This is based on an assumption of 4 continuous burning hours per day, for an energy cost of 7p/kWh.

CFL lamps require more energy to produce so, how are they energy efficient?

It takes approximately five times more energy to produce one CFL compared to one energy inefficient incandescent GLS lamp. However, as CFL lamps last on average between 6 to 15 times longer than energy inefficient incandescent GLS lamps, the amount of energy needed for the production of one CFL is comparable to the production of between 6 to 15 GLS lamps – hence the saving over the lifecycle of the product is much higher.

Therefore, an energy saving CFL has a much lower overall environmental impact than an energy inefficient incandescent lamp throughout its lifecycle. More than 90% of energy consumed during the lifecycle of a lamp is in the use phase and as CFLs are up to 80% more efficient than an average inefficient incandescent lamp, the savings are evident.

Does frequent switching reduce the life of CFLs?

A CFLs life is no longer affected by switching. The current standards for 'Energy Recommended' accreditation requires over 3,000 switching cycles per 8,000 hours of tested life which is many more than

would be necessary for normal domestic use. For special applications such as hallways in flats and lights in corridors activated by motion sensors, some manufacturers produce 'heavy duty' CFLs with up to 500,000 switching cycles capability and 15,000 hours life!

Why CFLs are are too big?

You will now find due to recent technical developments they are slightly smaller than their GLS equivalent and with the new classic shapes, also look almost the same as GLS bulbs, candles and reflector lamps.

Do CFLs need to be left switched on for more than 45 minutes as they consume so much energy when first switched on?

There is no reason to keep a CFL switched on for longer than a normal GLS bulb as they do not consume any greater energy during start up and run very efficiently immediately after the first 2 or 3 seconds.

Can you dim CFLs?

New lamps are available soon which can dim on ordinary domestic dimmer switches or alternately by staged dimming using a standard light switch.