

Twisted Truth #1- CFLs are not as bright as incandescent / only come in one color temperature.

A watt is the measure of power consumption, and is the common way incandescent light bulbs are identified – for example 60-watt, 75-watt and 100-watt. When purchasing a light bulb, however, what you really should look for is lumens, which is the measure of light output. When you purchase a 60-watt incandescent bulb, you are getting about 800 lumens. By selecting a 13-watt ENERGY STAR® qualified CFL instead, you can still get 800 lumens, but it requires much less power.

The correlated color temperature, or CCT, is a measurement used to describe the relative “whiteness” of a light source. CCT is defined in degrees Kelvin where the higher the temperature, the cooler the color. Unlike incandescent bulbs that only come in one color, CFLs come in a variety of color temperatures. CFLs currently come in 2700K, 3100K, 3500K, 4100K, 5500K, 6500K.

Twisted Truth # 2- CFLs have mercury and are not safe for the home or the environment.

CFLs contain a very small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing – an average of 5 milligrams, which is roughly equivalent to an amount that would cover the tip of a ball-point pen. No mercury is released when the bulbs are intact or in use.

By comparison, older home thermometers contain 500 milligrams and many manual thermostats contain up to 3,000 milligrams. It would take between 100 and 600 CFLs to equal those amounts.

CFLs are good for the environment because they present an opportunity to prevent mercury from entering our air, where it most affects our health. A coal burning power plant will emit 10 milligrams of mercury to produce the electricity to run an incandescent bulb for its life time compared to only 2.4 milligrams of mercury to run a CFL.

Twisted Truth # 3- CFLs can't be used everywhere in the home.

CFLs come in a variety of shapes and sizes suitable for all applications. The most common of which is the SpringLamps® which can be used in a wide range of applications, like table and floor lamps, ceiling fixtures, wall sconces, and even covered outdoor fixtures.

A-lamps are the most common shape for light bulbs in general. They have a round, elongated shape and are typically used in places where customers wouldn't want the look of a SpringLamp® like ceiling fans or fixtures where the bulb is exposed.

Reflectors are used indoors in recessed and track lighting fixtures and outdoors as flood lights.

Globe shaped CFLs are perfect for vanities, or anywhere else customers may want a more decorative bulb.

Torpedos with a candelabra base are decorative lamps that have a more elliptical shape. They are often used in chandeliers as well as other decorative fixtures that help with mood lighting and are dimmable.

PAR lamps which have texture surfaces and aluminum sides are mainly for outdoor applications such as flood lights for security, or on patios or decks.



Twisted Truths of Compact Fluorescent Bulbs (CFLs)

Twisted Truth # 4- CFLs are too expensive.

CFL prices range from \$2 to \$15 (for specialty bulbs), but save you about \$30 or more per bulb in energy savings over their lifetime, more than offsetting their initial cost. We recommend replacing the light bulbs in the fixtures you use most with ENERGY STAR qualified options, whether indoor or outdoor.

Twisted Truth # 5- CFLs are not widely available.

TCP produces more than 1.5 million CFLs every day.

CFLs are available at most major discount and hardware home centers nationwide, in addition to being widely available on-line.

Twisted Truth # 6- CFLs are temperature sensitive and can't be used outdoors.

Compact fluorescent light bulbs may generally be used where the air temperature is between 20 degrees Fahrenheit and 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Above 140 degrees, there may be reduced light output and premature ballast failure. CFLs have a harder time starting below 32 degrees, reducing the brightness.

Compact fluorescent light bulbs can be installed in exterior locations as long as they are a covered bulb such as a flood lamp. Regular SpringLamps® may be installed in sheltered exterior locations.

Twisted Truth # 7- CFLs cause migraines.

Older, electromagnetic fluorescent lighting ballasts from the 1960s commonly caused problems, generally associated with a perception of flicker. These included drowsiness, headaches, migraines, and difficulty in concentration. The perceived flicker was caused by the lamps response to the frequency of the input power coming from the building's electrical outlets and switches. The incoming power being supplied at 60Hz and was doubled to 120Hz to power the CFL. This means the lamp was powering on and off at a rate of 120 cycles per second. While the human eye could not consciously see the flicker, the effect of the pulses being sensed by the retina in the eye.

Newer, electronic ballasts use transistors to boost the input from 60Hz to the frequency range of 25 to 40 kHz. This means that CFLs now cycle at a rate of 25,000- 40,000 times per second. These new electronic ballasts eliminate the eye strain experienced with older electromagnetic ballasts.