

The Bright Stuff

Brighter, better light bulbs. **BY ROY BERENDSOHN**

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BEVEN in this high-technology age, there's no question that the incandescent bulb is the residential lighting workhorse. Simple and inexpensive, it remains little changed from the tungsten-filament model developed in 1910. And that's the problem. Electrically speaking, it's the product of a bygone era. By some estimates, only 4 to 6 percent of the electricity supplied to an incandescent bulb produces visible light. The rest produces heat. That's why the incandescent bulb is steadily being replaced by the long-lasting and electrically efficient compact fluorescent lamp (CFL). A CFL can last anywhere from 6000 to 10,000 hours, with some manufacturers citing models designed for 20,000 hours—or the equivalent of five to 15 years under normal use. A good-quality incandescent lasts about 1000 hours. A CFL costs between \$5 and \$10, however, while an incandescent costs from 35 cents to \$2, depending on wattage and other factors. Still, bulb manufacturers estimate that a CFL will pay for itself in a year or two. Here are the latest replacement options for your old incandescent bulbs.



TCP 3-way spring lamp

SPEED OF LIGHT

Until recently, getting three distinctly different light levels from a CFL was a problem. Technical Consumer Products (TCP) offers a spring lamp (a CFL shaped like a spring) that can replace a 50/100/150-watt incandescent bulb. The bulb lasts for 10,000 hours and costs about \$15. A dimmable version of the bulb, not shown,

costs about \$17. Both are sold at home centers. Contact Technical Consumer Products, 300 Lena Dr., Aurora, OH 44202; 800-324-1496; www.tcpi.com.

Cathedral ceilings are nothing new, but they are more widely used in new construction—along with light fixtures that are hard to reach. Philips houses a spring-shaped CFL inside a reflector floodlamp globe designed for these fixtures.

The 16-watt lamp is rated for 7000 hours, or about five years' worth of use. That should reduce your bulb-changing trips up and down a ladder. Also, it is UL-listed for wet locations, so it can be used outdoors. It costs \$8 to \$10 at hardware stores and home centers. Contact Philips Lighting, 200 Franklin Square Dr., Somerset, NJ 08875; www.lighting.philips.com.



PHILIPS CFL reflector floodlamp

THE NEW LIGHT: LED

Light-emitting diodes have been used for years in electronic products but not for general lighting. Westinghouse says it is the first to break that barrier with its product, which uses a proprietary cone-shaped plastic lens inside the globe-shaped outer lens to give its LED bulb a pleasing light. It says the 20-watt bulb produces light



WESTINGHOUSE LED

output equal to a 100-watt incandescent. The company projects the bulb's life as being about 80,000 hours. At press time, its price was estimated at \$40. Contact Westinghouse Lighting, 12401 McNulty Rd., Philadelphia, PA 19154; 800-999-2226; www.westinghouselighting.com.

Finally, if you need under-cabinet lighting, you might consider General Electric's Gelcore LED strip. The flexible strip has an adhesive backing and five white LEDs. The low-voltage transformer has a 6-ft. cord, so you can plug it into a nearby outlet. A cord-mounted rotary switch controls the lights. This product costs about \$25 at Wal-Mart. Contact Gelcore, 6180 Halle Dr., Valley View, OH 44125; www.gelcore.com.



GE Gelcore under-cabinet light