

## **Increase Your Lighting Efficiency (and save \$!)**

Appropriate lighting contributes to our comfort and our ability to work and thrive in the buildings we occupy. Our choice of light bulbs and natural light sources, as well as their placement within the indoor environment, plays a big role in the overall health of our families and our impact on the environment.

Standard incandescent light bulbs, which are commonly used in most households, have many environmental downfalls. About 90% of the power used by incandescent bulbs is given off as heat, and only 10% is actually converted into light. Besides wasting electricity to generate a small amount of light, energy is misused in creating heat, which can adversely affect indoor climate control. These light bulbs last a fraction of the time compared to some of the alternatives widely available today.

Compact fluorescent light bulbs are about three to four times more efficient at converting electricity into light. The Rocky Mountain Institute, a non-profit organization focusing on energy and resource efficiency, notes that each incandescent bulb that we replace with a compact fluorescent bulb prevents the emission of 1,000-2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide from power plants and 8-16 pounds of sulfur dioxide. One compact fluorescent light bulb also eliminates the need to produce and dispose of up to a dozen incandescent bulbs, and saves us around \$25-50 in electricity costs over the lifetime of the bulb.

Light bulbs differ in the quality of color they deliver. Light bulb manufacturers have dramatically improved the quality of color given off from all light bulbs, with a goal in most cases to replicate the quality of light coming from indirect sun, which is the best quality of light for work. Full spectrum light bulbs provide a more balanced light by filtering out the excess yellow and green light emitted by ordinary light bulbs. Studies have found that full spectrum light should help you to read for longer periods of time with less eye strain. You should also experience a warmer and more pleasing, natural looking environment. Colors will look truer and more vibrant. Contrast will be sharper.