

tec the Environment Centre (tec)

Your guide to buying the right light bulb

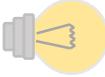
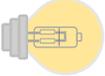
What are low energy bulbs?

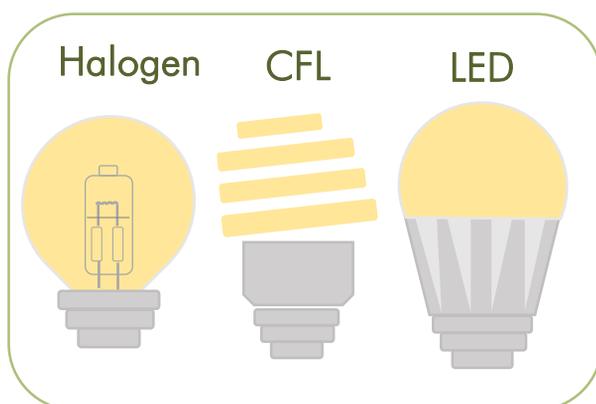
In recent years, the traditional 'incandescent' style light bulb has been phased out and replaced by more efficient low energy bulbs.

There are three different types of light bulb technology: **LED**, **CFL** and **Halogen**.

Each of these can produce the same amount of light as its equivalent traditional bulb, but at a fraction of the running cost and energy use.

How do low energy bulbs compare to a traditional 60 Watt bulb?

Type of bulb	Watts	Yearly running cost*
 Traditional	60	£47
 Halogen	42	£33
 CFL	12	£12
 LED	9	£7



What else should I consider to help me choose between the different types?

- (1) how quickly does it reach its full brightness after you have turned it on (lighting up time)
- (2) how long does it last (lifespan**), and
- (3) how much does it cost to buy?

With so many makes and models available, it is difficult to answer these questions exactly but as a rule of thumb the following applies:

Type of bulb	Lighting up time	Lifespan**	Approximate cost
 Halogen	instant	2 years (2,000 hours)	£2.00
 CFL	a few seconds or more	10 years (10,000 hours)	£2.50
 LED	instant	25 years (25,000 hours)	£3.50

* These figures are approximate, and based on average prices in 2018 for running 5 bulbs for 3 hours each per day. ** The lifespan should not be confused with the manufacturer's guarantee. The guarantee is often shorter, and sets out the time period when you could claim a refund if the bulb became faulty. The lifespan is the number of years you can expect the bulb to provide its stated brightness.

Choosing the right light bulb

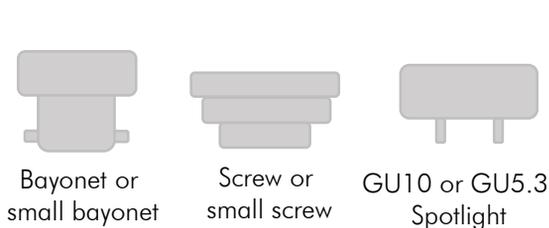
Once you have decided on which bulb technology you want, you need to decide on the right style of bulb for your home. It can be helpful to take your old bulb with you to the shop to make sure you buy the correct replacement.

The huge variety of bulbs available on the market allows us to choose:

1. Bulb shape (some main shapes of bulb):



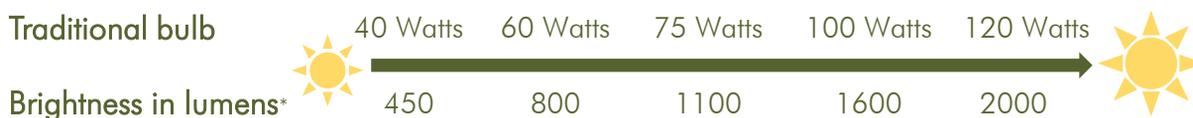
2. Type of fitting (some main types of fittings):



3. Colour of light:



4. Brightness: In the past, we thought about the brightness of a bulb in terms of its wattage: a 120 watt bulb was very bright, whereas a 40 Watt bulb was fairly dim. On new light bulb packaging, the brightness is shown in **lumens**.



So if you want a new bulb as bright as an old-style 60 Watt, look out for one that provides about 800 lumens. Remember that whichever bulb technology you choose, brighter bulbs use more Watts and more Watts means higher running costs.

What else is new?

Light bulb technology is changing fast with more choices available all the time. You can even get LED bulbs with “smart” technology:

- Bulbs with remote controls
- Bulbs with integral blue-tooth speakers to play your music
- Bulbs with motion sensors, turning on and off just when you need them
- ‘Dawn til dusk’ bulbs that automatically sense the ambient light and adjust their own brightness accordingly
- Two-tone bulbs, e.g. that allow you to switch them between warm white and daylight settings

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