

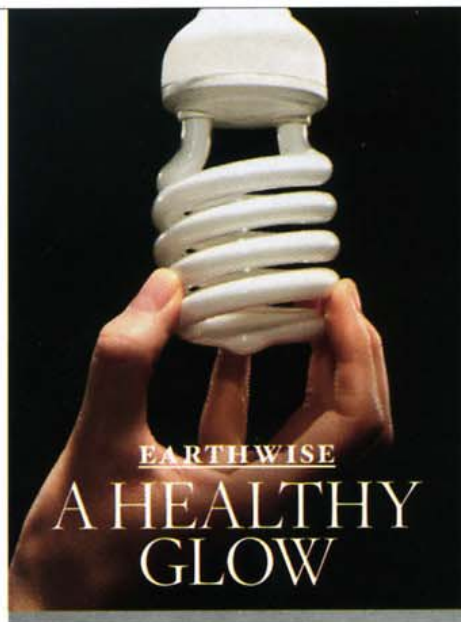
HOW MANY politicians does it take to change a light-bulb? Last December, 400 members of Congress voted to pass a bill phasing out the use of incandescent bulbs between 2012 and 2014. You can start switching now—and don't let confusion about compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) dim your enthusiasm. The facts:

Are CFLs safe in recessed fixtures?

Absolutely. (They're actually much cooler than incandescent bulbs.) But CFLs do work best when air can circulate around them and disperse heat; a buildup of heat dims the light output and shortens the bulb's lifespan. For recessed fixtures, use a bulb labeled as suitable for a recessed can. For help choosing the right light, visit environmentaldefense.org.

My CFL didn't last as long as the package claimed it would. Why not?

Turning a CFL on and off frequently can



cause the light to burn out early. Forget what your parents taught you: Don't turn off the light every time you leave the room. The EPA recommends leaving CFLs on for at least 15 minutes at a time.

Don't CFLs contain mercury?

Yes, but usually less than the amount in

an old thermometer. And, because CFLs use less electricity, they lower overall mercury emissions by reducing our consumption of coal (which releases mercury when burned). Still, if your bulb breaks, it's wise to be careful. Follow the EPA's cleanup guidelines at epa.gov/mercury/spills.

What about all that packaging? Doesn't it undercut the environmental benefits of CFLs?

Many CFLs come in plastic wrapping that can't be recycled, but several companies, such as Sylvania and NOMA, package their bulbs with eco-friendly materials.

What do I do when the bulb burns out?

Recycle it. Call 800-CLEANUP or visit earth911.org to find a mercury disposal site near your home. —LOUISA THOMAS

For more tips on eco-friendly living, visit thedailygreen.com.



BIG IDEA

Pillow Talk

WHAT: Haba Na Haba, design collective

WHERE: U.S. and Tanzania

THE GOODS: Haba Na Haba specializes in soft landings. The assortment of irresistible pillowcases sold on their

Web site (habanahaba.com) includes a menagerie of silk-screened and embroidered African animals as well as kuba cloth designs in bold geometric patterns. Also for sale: a colorful selection of handbags, batik placemats, and tablecloths, handmade by artisans in Tanzania. (We're

partial to the zebra napkins.)

THE BACKSTORY: Haba Na Haba ("little by little" in Swahili) started in 2001, when Beth Peterson, a marketing consultant based outside Chicago, went to Africa as a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity. There she met Habitat coordinator Grace Ndunguru Msindai, who was teaching Tanzanian teenagers orphaned by the AIDS pandemic how to make batik fabric to sell at local bazaars.

THE EUREKA MOMENT: "Women were launching small manufacturing businesses in Tanzania, and it hit me that I could help them sell their work in the U.S.," says Peterson. "In return, I asked them to teach a trade to the

orphans Grace works with."

THE UPSHOT: Since 2001, Haba Na Haba has placed 162 young women (and a few men) in jobs at seven companies. They receive a wage or stipend while learning job skills like sewing, typing, and woodworking. A portion of Haba Na Haba's profits goes to the Green Door, an AIDS orphanage and child advocacy group in Tanzania.

THE FUTURE: More product lines — jewelry, scarves, woodcrafts — and more business partnerships, if all goes according to plan. "But we still focus small," Peterson says. "Just like our name, little by little, we're trying to make an impact on one person at a time." —JENNIFER HAUPT

If you have only... 10 minutes: Drop your old cell phone. If you want to trade it for a nicer model, post your wireless plan on cellswapper.com and legally transfer the rest of your contract to someone else—instead of canceling for a high termination fee.

