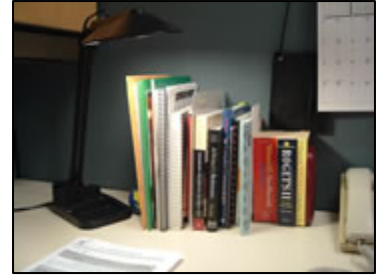


Lighting Tips: Why Spot Lighting Saves Energy and Money

By Chris Dorsi

Have you ever wondered what portion of your electric bill is consumed by the lights in your home? According to the Energy Information Administration, lighting accounts for up to one-fifth the total electrical consumption in many U.S. households. And a good portion of that energy may be wasted because light fixtures are poorly located.



You can save energy and money by using spot lighting. Spot lighting is located close to the area where you're working, whether that is a desk, a kitchen counter, or the bathroom sink. Spot lighting can be used in conjunction with area lighting that illuminates an entire room, or it can be used alone for maximum savings.

You may have noticed that it's hard to read under a dim light unless you move close to the lamp. That's because as light travels outward from its source, the same amount of illumination falls upon an increasingly large area. This explains why overhead ceiling fixtures are often configured to hold three 100-watt incandescent lamps, while a nearby table lamp provides plenty of light for a desktop task with only one 60-watt bulb.

One of the best places for spot lighting is in your kitchen. Small lamps that fit under an upper cabinet will direct light right where you need it the most, and there are many different styles available at home improvement stores. If you install new fixtures, be sure to place the switches in a convenient location so you can shut them off as you leave the room. When you are using spot lighting, remember to shut off the area lighting in the room save even more energy and money.

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