



Before Leaving The Room, Ask Yourself:

Are the lights turned off?

According to the US [Department of Energy](#):

- A general rule-of-thumb for when to turn off a fluorescent light is if you leave a room for more than 15 minutes.
- Incandescent lights (if you still have any) should be turned off whenever they are not needed or better yet, replace them with a compact fluorescent.

Does it use more energy to turn lights on & off?

It is a popularly held belief that fluorescent lights use a "lot" of energy to get started, and thus it is better not to turn them off for "short" periods. There is an increase in power demand when a light is switched on, and the exact amount of this increase depends on the type of ballast and lamp. In any case, the relatively higher "inrush" current required lasts for half a cycle, or 1/120th of a second. The amount of electricity consumed to supply the inrush current is equal to a few seconds or less of normal light operation. Turning off fluorescent lights for more than 5 seconds will save more energy than will be consumed in turning them back on again.

Does it harm the light bulb to turn them on & off?

There is a cost trade-off between saving energy and money by turning a light off "frequently" and having to replace the bulbs "more" frequently. This is because the reduction in usable lamp life due to *frequent* on/off switching will probably be greater than the benefit of extending the useful life of the bulb from reduced use. Frequently means turning the light off and on many times during the day. The most cost-effective length of time that a light (or array of lights) can be turned off before the value of the savings exceeds the cost of having to replace bulbs (due to their shortened operating life) will depend on the type and model of bulb and ballast.

For assistance with lighting, please contact the Work Control Desk at facilities@radford.edu or by calling 7800.

