

HOME LIGHTING SOLUTIONS 3 steps to light up your home

The best lighting schemes mix layers of ambient, task and accent lights. Check out our ways to introduce them to your home.

1 USE AMBIENT LIGHTING TO CREATE THE MOOD



Get an elegant background glow in your lighting scheme

- Create ambient light that mimics daylight
Ambient lighting should be diffused, inconspicuous and blend into the surroundings.
- Don't rely on a single ceiling light as your main source
This tends to be the cause of most problems as it creates a stark, flat effect. Adding several more lights at different levels will create a more balanced result.
- Fit a diffusing shade to your central ceiling light
Try a shade in frosted glass, paper or opaque acrylic to soften the effect.
- Use uplighter lamps and light shades
These will cast light upwards, so it 'bounces' off the ceiling and is thrown around the room. These work best in rooms with white or pale ceilings, and are great for home offices as they don't produce harsh glare.
- Fit dimmer switches
These will enable you to control the level of ambient light according to the weather and time of day - they're useful in living rooms and bedrooms.
- Check the height of a chandelier or pendant
It should be at least 7ft above the floor. If you have very low ceilings, consider flush-mounted fittings to gain extra inches.
- Always have a light behind the TV
This will prevent eye strain. It reduces the contrast between the brightness of the screen and the darkness of the room.

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2. ADD FOCUSED TASK LIGHTING

Task lighting is the direct light you need to cook, read or work by



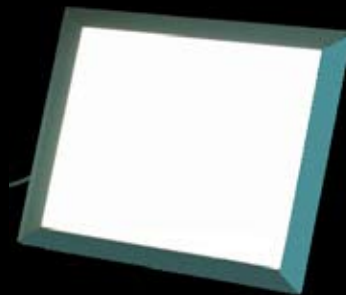
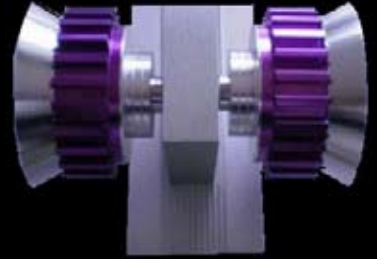
- **Tailor lighting to the task at hand**
If you're engaging in a specific task, such as reading, computer work, or close-up needlework, supplement ambient lighting with on-the-spot lighting so you can get the job done without straining your eyes.
- **Create bright pools of light**
Use lamps to direct a concentrated beam onto a specific spot, so that you can see what you're working on in detail without straining your eyes or having to hunch closer to it.
- **Choose the right light bulbs**
Go for a minimum of 6W for LED light bulbs - so make sure your light fitting and shade can take a bulb of that wattage. Task lighting should be three to four times brighter than the surrounding ambient lighting to prevent eye strain.
- **Use solid shades for task lights**
It helps to create a concentrated shaft of light - any seepage will bounce off surrounding surfaces, especially computer screens, causing glare. Go for a task light with a metal, ceramic, solid-coloured glass or leather shade.
- **Opt for a fully adjustable desk lamp**
An Anglepoise-style lamp, with a cantilevered arm that can be pivoted, angled, raised and lowered is ideal. Go for one with a longish stem - if it's too short, you won't be able to position it high enough over your work, which will produce shadows.
- **Find a floor lamp with a tilting shade for reading**
It's important not to have too much light reflecting back into your face, so prevent glare with an adjustable light shade and position the lamp behind you, at a level higher than the top of your head.
- **Boost kitchen lighting**
Go for task lighting in the kitchen to highlight working areas, such as the sink, worktops and cooker. To avoid working in your own shadow, lights should be positioned so that light comes from either in front of you or from the sides, not from behind you. Opt for additional worktop lighting with a run of spotlights on the underside of cabinets to direct an even, glare-free light from above, and go for a cooker hood with built-in lighting. Avoid portable lighting in kitchens, as trailing cables can be hazardous.
- **Light up your bedroom**
Try task lighting in key areas of your bedroom. Your dressing table or area should ideally be lit horizontally from both sides to avoid shadows being cast across your face. Try two slender lamps either side or an illuminated mirror. Spotlights directed towards wardrobes will give you a better view of the contents, as will interior lights that flick on automatically when a door is opened.
- **Go for low lighting in the dining room**
Put your dining table in the spotlight by hanging light fittings directly over it. Leave a gap of 60-90cm between the table and the fittings, so they bathe the tabletop in light without swinging too close to diners' heads. Choose deep, bulb-shielding shades so your guests won't be dazzled.

3 DECORATE WITH ACCENT LIGHTING



Add depth to your room with accent lighting - the contrast of light and shade gives a dramatic effect. It's the perfect way to highlight a specific part of a room - an interesting piece of furniture, an eye-catching architectural feature or a favourite painting.

- Always combine accent lighting with ambient lighting Spotlights, downlighters, uplighters, tracks and lamps used as accent lighting should add texture, focus and shape to a general lighting scheme, so they won't work on their own.
- Don't overuse accent lighting
If you add too much, the overall effect will be lessened or lost. For example, if you were to highlight all the pictures on a wall, you'd create a single wash of light rather than focused beams. Be selective and use lights to accentuate key pieces only.
- Avoid glare when lighting glass-fronted pictures
Use a wall-mounted bar-style picture light with a Cool White LED that will spread a bright, white light evenly across the face of the picture or painting, minimising reflection. Alternatively, use an eyeball-style ceiling spotlight that can be swivelled and set on a broad beam to flood the picture with light.
- Light collections with spotlights in concealed fittings to minimise glare
If you have a collection displayed on shelves, avoid downlighters as they'll cast shadows on the lower items. Instead, light your pieces from the sides or attach strip lights to the underside of the front edge of each shelf.
- Make glass objects sparkle
Glass objects look best when lit from behind - the light will create a translucent glow, rather than a harsh glare.
- Light indoor plants with concealed uplighters
Try placing one behind the plant pot or you can buy tiny uplighter spikes that are easy to push into the compost. The light bounces off the floor and ceiling and diffuses back into the foliage to create shadows and bring out its silhouette. Check the plant's label first to see if it loves sunlight or should be kept out of it, to avoid scorching the leaves.
- Change your room's proportions in an instant
All it takes is cleverly placed accent lighting. You can make a small room appear larger and airier by using uplighters to bounce light onto a white-painted ceiling. To make a short room seem longer, use downlighters to create a panel of light at the far end. This will draw the eye towards it, giving an elongating effect. Alternatively, if you have a big room with high ceilings that feels too empty and unwelcoming, cluster small table lamps together into groups. This creates low pools of light, leaving the ceiling in darkness, making it seem lower and the room cosier and warmer.



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