



Lighting Ideas to Brighten Every Home

When it comes to choosing energy-efficient light sources for your living space, there is more to consider than what type of bulbs to use. Many elements play a role in the energy efficiency of a room's lighting.

Here's a set of guidelines to help plan or update the lighting of a room and use existing lights more efficiently:

Design Guidelines

Light-colored interior surfaces reflect light and therefore reduce the level of artificial lighting needed.

Most rooms are best equipped with two types of lighting. General lighting is needed for **all-over illumination**, for which pendant or surface-mounted light fittings work best.

Because **downlights** provide individual pools of light, several may be needed to provide the same degree of illumination as one pendant light. Be sure to choose light fittings that do not obscure the light, and you may even be able to switch to a lower wattage bulb.

The second type of lighting that a room should have is **task lighting**, for illuminating specific areas used for reading and other general tasks where a concentrated and bright source of light is needed. Get used to turning off general lighting when engaged in activities that require task lighting, when you have no need to illuminate the entire room.

Optimal Efficiency

You can use the lights in your home more efficiently by installing dimmer controls, motion sensors, and multiple switches—most of these are inexpensive and easy to install.

Placing **two-way switches at all exits from rooms** allows for lights to easily be turned off whenever someone leaves the room.

Installing **dimmer controls** for incandescent lights will save both energy and money.

Dimming your lights by half results in your **bulbs lasting about 20 times longer**, and also makes for a nice, warm atmosphere.

Installing **occupancy sensor switches** in bathrooms, closets, and garages prevents lights from being left on accidentally, though the sensors themselves use some power continuously. Make sure that the ones you use have a built-in daylight sensor so that lights don't turn on unnecessarily.

Use **timers and daylight and motion sensors to control outdoor lights**. Try taking advantage of the sun even at night by using solar powered lighting for garden and/or security lights.