



Wendy Darke Interior Designer at Design Inspiration sheds some light on the situation...

# ILLUMINATING!

**When you embark on a new look for a room, one of the first considerations is the lighting.**

The most successful schemes utilise various lighting sources, with a combination of fittings; ceiling, fixed, wall mounted and low level lamps. Feature lighting is also another option; this includes illuminating plants, pictures, display cabinets, stair treads or even your bath!

Different rooms require varying amounts of light. Kitchens benefit greatly from task lighting - concealed lights under wall mounted cabinets help to light the area, whilst further general lighting in the form of

recessed halogen lights is a good idea. So many of today's kitchens tend to be open plan, multifunction areas that additional light fittings can give the various areas separation. For example, low level pendant fittings over a table, or a multi light standard lamp next to a seating area are very flexible when fitted with a dimmer to control the mood.

Living rooms tend to be places of relaxation and the light needs to be softer, background lighting. Utilising two or three placed around the room on lower level surfaces reflects into the room making it feel spacious. The shadows that these pools of light create, add interest and create a

feeling of cosiness. This low level lighting aids relaxation, as our eyes no longer roam around the room.

However, it is worth remembering to have a good lamp positioned behind and slightly above you when reading, as the last thing you want is to strain your eyes.

Dining rooms require a lower level of light concentrated over the table when eating, this creates a more intimate ambience. However, dining tables are often multifunctional as a work station for hobbies or homework, so to alter from dinner party mood to work mode, literally at the flick of switch, install a dimmer!

Hallways tend to be darker and picture lights positioned here allow you to highlight groups of paintings. Recessed spots create a path to follow, table lamps on hall tables give a warm welcoming feel, stair tread lights can illuminate stairs and if you are fortunate enough to have a large stairwell, a long pendant light fitting can be a real feature.

Bathrooms are places of relaxation and candles set a cosy atmosphere. Some baths and showers even come with lights that change colour to alter your mood. Some mirrors come with lights which is ideal for shaving - recessed halogens set into the ceiling are ideal for these areas, and give a good general light.

When it comes to ceiling or wall fixtures in areas that are close to water, make sure you comply with current regulations as water and electricity do not mix!

Bedrooms are often overlooked when it comes to lighting and a last minute pendant shade tends to be the usual afterthought! These rooms have many uses besides the more intimate moments where a dimmer switch comes in handy and require task lighting. Pendants hung over bedside tables or bedside lamps allow us to have a clear light to read in bed, or, when fitted with a low watt bulb allows us to get up without disturbing our partner.

Crystal chandeliers can work equally as well in a contemporary, modern home as a traditional Victorian house but, by the same token, modern fixtures can look just as good if placed over an antique dining table. Above all, I don't think you can ever have too much lighting, just as long as you can adjust what lights you do have, allowing you to alter the mood of the room. Above all else, remember to have fun with your lighting!

## HOT TIPS!

Avoid having table lamps at a level where you can see the bulb, as this produces a glare and detracts from the effect you were trying to achieve.

Remember, rooms with dark coloured walls may require more lighting as the light is absorbed rather than reflected. Don't mount wall lights too near the ceiling as the light is reflected too strongly on to the ceiling.

Always use a qualified electrician!

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