

## BUYER'S GUIDE

## Lighting

Design your set-up at the start of your project to create layers of light in every space



**T**here was once a time when we relied on one central ceiling pendant – usually a design afterthought – to illuminate a space. These days, however, a considered lighting scheme is recognised as an essential part of any build project. Consult a specialist designer and they will advise you to start planning your blueprint as early as possible if you want to integrate layers of illumination into the architecture of your home.

Break down your expectations to give yourself a clear idea of what you want to achieve. What will the area be used for? Do you want to draw attention to the centre of the room or the view outside? Perhaps you want to highlight or dramatise particular features. Is there anything that you *don't* want to see?

Treat each room as an individual zone, but take the overall feel of the house into account. Use the lighting as a way to link the spaces together.

### Plan ahead

For self-builders, the design, cabling and installation plans should be in place ahead of the first fix stage, especially if you're including an automated lighting layout. For renovators, anything built before the Eighties may only have a central light fitting. This means that the ceiling and walls will need to be accessed to install built-in fixtures, so in these cases it might make sense to replace the whole ceiling.

Multiple lighting systems should be wired on to different circuits to control task, accent and ambient lights individually and, as obvious as it sounds, switches should be placed within easy reach of entry and exit points.

### Highlight features

Accent lights add an extra dimension to a room and should work alongside ambient illumination. Include →

### 1 Bold approach

This cube house was designed by Spanish architects, Arnau Vergés. A similar 35W IP67 fluorescent tube fitting with a warm golden filter can be shone on to a reflective surface, from £160 for 1.6m, Brilliant Lighting (01845 525 664; brilliant-lighting.co.uk)

### 2 Step to it

A sandblasted glass staircase is softly lit by LED strips, from £160 per m, behind the treads. Project by MH Costa Construction (020 8450 7341; mhcostaconstruction.com)



this type of fitting to highlight focal points, such as key artwork or an architectural feature.

'Residential lighting is about making the interior come to life in the most sensitive way, and should be adaptable for different uses and inhabitants,' says Tim Fonfara, creative director and founder of Luxologie (020 7183 1643; luxologie.com). 'I prefer to build up subtle effects, layering them so that, in the end, they're everywhere you look.'

### Create interest

With advances in LED technology, recessed lighting no longer means ceiling downlights. Spotlights, strip and tape options make it easy to define characteristic features and form an intimate glow around staircases, shelving and headboards. They can also be tucked into niches to create washes across ceilings, floors and walls.

### Make a statement

Sometimes, all a home needs is a well-placed spotlight or a striking chandelier to create visual impact and set the mood. If you have a high or vaulted ceiling, an eye-catching design will highlight the upper two-thirds of your room.

'This style of lighting can be looked at from two perspectives: a single pendant that's a statement in itself, and fittings that create a statement by

bringing out a feature within the room,' says Luke Thomas, associate lighting designer at John Cullen Lighting. 'Decorative pieces work well over an island or dining table, hanging through a stairwell or in the centre of a seating area. Many designs aim to draw attention, using light to create a sparkle effect or cast shadows on surrounding surfaces.'

### Continue outside

Exterior lighting is often overlooked. As well as improving the safety and security of your home, it can be an easy way to boost its kerb appeal. Fit discreet downlights above an entrance, integrate lights into steps, or create a runway along a path.

When it comes to shedding light on outside living spaces, there are a few basic design rules to follow: avoid bright spotlights; less is usually more, and conceal light sources in foliage, masonry and joinery as they can look out of place in daylight.

'External lighting benefits from layering just as much as internal treatments,' says Melanie Shaw, design director at Brilliant Lighting (01845 525 664; brilliantlighting.co.uk). 'Low-level illumination can wash across paths or create magical effects within a planting scheme. Use ground-recessed uplights or spike spotlights to accentuate verticals in trees, shrubs or building structures.' **GD**

### NEED TO KNOW

>> A lighting specialist should be able to help you visualise your project and create a scheme with cabling plans and product specifications. Beware of companies offering a free service; there may be a huge markup on their products.

>> Regulations for bathroom lighting are very strict. The Ingress Protection (IP) rating refers to how well a fitting is protected from water and steam. Bathrooms have different zones, so check with

an electrician that your lighting meets these guidelines.

>> You must ensure that the direction and intensity of external lights won't be a nuisance to others and that infrared security beams won't be triggered by pedestrians or traffic. Visit [planningportal.co.uk](http://planningportal.co.uk) for further information.

>> Compact fluorescents (CFLs) and LEDs are the most energy-efficient light bulbs. Visit [energysavingtrust.co.uk](http://energysavingtrust.co.uk) for more details.



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**3 Radiant glow** Flush-to-the-floor uplighters shine onto a textured feature wall in this raised outdoor zone by Gregory Phillips Architects (020 7724 3040; gregoryphillips.com)

**4 Water feature** Fusing light and water, the Axor ShowerLamp by Nendo is striking against dark tiles; ceiling option also available, from £1,236, Hansgrohe (01372 472 001; hansgrohe.co.uk)

**5 Bespoke design** Brighten shelving with recessed backlighting. 100% Light UK Eco 96 strip lighting, from £25 per m, All Square (020 7727 0606; allsquarelighting.co.uk)



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NEXT MONTH  
**Fireplaces**



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**6 Linear look** Simple LED tape can lend drama to slate floor tiles. Try EcoLed Decostrip S10, from £59 per m (020 8492 7633; ecoledlight.co.uk)

**7 Clever counter** Cabinet lights create an extra visual layer and tonal mood. 9.6W 3,000K LED strip, £65 per m, Xavio Design of Mayfair (020 3301 0077; xavio-design.com)

### ASK THE EXPERT

Melanie Shaw, design director at Brilliant Lighting, sheds some light on your frequently asked questions



**How much should I budget for my lighting?**

'If you're after a professionally designed, house-wide treatment,

using high-quality fittings and a lighting control system, expect it to come in somewhere between the cost of your kitchen and the windows and doors. This is only a rough guide, but it's a good starting point for budgeting purposes.'

**Do I need a lighting control system?**

'Simply putting in a smart control system won't magically transform your ambience. Beautiful lighting comes from a well-thought-out design and good-quality fittings. However, a smart

system will make it easy to bring your scheme to life and, most importantly, it's simply the best way to manage and dim LED lights.

**What is the difference between dedicated LED fittings and retrofitted LED lamps?**

'Dedicated LED fittings don't have a replaceable light source; the LED chips are integral to the fitting. Retrofit lamps are designed as replacements for incandescent sources such as halogen bulbs. High-quality dedicated fittings can be designed to optimise the output and reliability of the light source, so they're capable of much higher light levels than retrofit lamps. They also have a longer useful life expectancy.' **(01845 525 664; brilliantlighting.co.uk)**