

LIGHTING

Natural light is the first light source to consider. Natural light refers to sunlight that enters the house through windows, doors, skylights, etc. Light through windows on north or east walls usually has a cool, bluish cast. Rooms with cool window lighting that are decorated in cool colors, might feel too cold. Warm colors in a room with natural lighting from the east or north seem to balance the cool light.

Windows on the south or west provide more sun later in the day. This type of light casts warm, orange tones. Adding neutral or cool colors to these rooms will make them seem more calm and relaxed.

More light bounces off light colors and shiny surfaces than off dull surfaces and dark colors. That is why so many ceilings are painted white.

Incandescent light (the light bulb most people use) is produced when the filament in a light bulb (usually a thread of tungsten) is heated enough to glow. The bulb is filled with argon or nitrogen, so the filament will not burn up.

Incandescent bulbs will burn about 700-1000 hours. A bulb gets a little black as it becomes used because some of the tungsten evaporates.

A fluorescent bulb lasts up to ten times longer than an incandescent bulb. They also use less electricity and do not produce damaging heat. However, they do not feel as homey and comfortable as incandescent bulbs. They are commonly used in office buildings and other work places.

A fairly new type of residential lighting is the use of "Halogen". Halogen bulbs have been used for many years in car headlights and slide projectors. They are made from quartz and are sometimes simply referred quartz lamps. Like incandescent bulbs, they have a tungsten filament. However, they are filled with halogen which prevents blackening with age and keeps the lamp bright. The light they give is more similar to that of sunlight than is fluorescent light, but halogen bulbs burn whiter than incandescent bulbs.

There are three basic kinds of lighting in most rooms: general, task, and decorative.

GENERAL lighting refers to overall lighting. Rooms designed for high levels of activity generally require substantial light. For example, offices are well lit to aid in work and productivity. A shopping center is well lit to keep shoppers moving and to attract their attention. A low level of light is more restful, or romantic. People tend to draw together in dim light. People are also quieter in dim light.

TASK lighting refers to lighting a small space to perform a specific task, such as reading, cooking, or eating. Examples of task lighting include make-up lights, sewing lamps, and dining room chandeliers.

ACCENT OR DECORATIVE lights is used to draw attention to specific areas or objects. For example, lights might be built into bookcases or display units to accent art or collectibles.