

luxury lighting

Illuminate your home with rays of style.

If you're dazed and confused when it comes to lighting your home, you are not alone. That's why we've asked some top interior designers to shed some light on achieving the perfect levels of luxury light.

"The most important thing" says **Rebecca Weir**, lighting designer and director of London-based consultancy LightIQ (www.lightiq.com), "is to ask yourself what your needs are now and what will they be in five years time?" she advises, adding that they will almost certainly change over time.

Once you have a general idea of the look you're after, consider your furniture, style and décor, assess your needs and then choose a combination of the four layers of light that will give any space a luxurious glow:

General lighting – for a flat, even distribution of light, use low voltage downlights in the ceiling and/or a centrepiece fitting such as a chandelier or a pendent

Task lighting – specifically located and directed, floor and table lamps can be combined to cater for specific tasks, such as chopping vegetables or reading.

Accent lighting – use sparingly to reveal texture, colour and form within a space, either to highlight artwork and pictures or to add interest to blank walls.

Natural lighting – let the light flood in through carefully-placed skylights, French doors and sash windows.



After you've got your head around these combinations, identify focal points – art, a piece of fabric, a sculpture or vase – and project light to bring out the best in a space. "Your eye is always drawn to the brightest point in a room, so get that wow-factor by putting a light on its own circuit," says Weir.

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For a novel approach, try experimenting with neon lighting which gives out a flat light or go overboard and splash out on Swarovski crystal ceiling lights. The renowned cut crystal specialist boldly decided to reinvent the chandelier, and for the last couple of years has produced spectacularly innovative chandeliers designed by big names and displaying even bigger price tags.

Overseen by Nadja Swarovski, these chandeliers sport intriguing names such as "Fire and Smoke", "Hover" and "Iceberg" and are extravagant, conceptual and dramatic and literally ooze crystal droplets of luxury. On the other hand, if its understated luxury you're after, think small. "The more expensive the light the more discreet it can be," says Weir.

To avoid the airport runway look, avoid placing recessed downlights in long straight lines. "I always place the downlights (often directional for additional flexibility) where I want the light rather than in some pretty pattern in the ceiling," says interior designer Adrienne Chinn. To go the extra mile, combine general downlights with a special fitting or chandelier as a centrepiece, and used recessed floor uplights to add interesting effects to the walls.

Chinn is fond of vintage wall lights made between the 1930s and 1960s, which will personalise a space and ensure you'll stand out from the crowd. And last but not perhaps most importantly, to ensure versatility and ultimate luxury, install a simple but sophisticated dimmer system to create different moods in a room.

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