




— Dan the —
SparkyMan

The Ultimate Lighting Design Guide for Your New Home or Renovation



Have you ever been to a display home or trade show and walked away in awe of the home interiors? Have you ever wondered how they manage to make a kitchen, living room, or bathroom look that good?

Well, in addition to clever designs and beautiful furnishings, there's always a common factor – **The Lighting.**

Lighting does so much more than help us see in the dark. In fact, it's probably the single most underrated aspect of any new home or renovation.

With this guide, you'll learn how to plan, design, and implement the lighting for your brand-new living spaces. If you've never really thought about it until now – you're about to find out just how much of a difference great lighting can make to the look, feel, and lifestyle of a home.

With Good Planning, Anything Is Possible.

You've probably been thinking about it for a while now. You'd like to build a brand-new home – or perhaps you dream about renovating your existing one. Either way, your head is swimming with ideas. You've got a blank slate to work with, and your new living spaces can be anything you want.

You may have been checking out home shows, display villages, and spending hours on Google, Pinterest, and Instagram. There are so many possibilities, and so many of them **look amazing.**

You might already be at the stage of choosing paint colour, cabinets, furniture, even the bathroom taps. **It's a very exciting time.**

BUT ... something is missing. You still need a way to tie everything together. In your mind, it all looks great. But how do you make it look display home great?

This answer, without question, is **the lighting.** And if you really want the look – you need to **plan it now.** A poorly-lit room can let down even the most beautiful interiors - resulting in everything looking flat, lifeless, and bland.



Conversely, a room with too many lights can be problematic as well. It can make your home feel clinical and without any nuance. It can leave you squinting at the dinner table - and struggling to relax on the couch after a long busy day.

Like any great home renovation – the key to great lighting is **finding the right balance**.

Great lighting can:

- Make a small space feel bigger
- Add warmth, style, and character
- Highlight the best features of a room
- Create a calm and relaxing vibe

...and most importantly:

- Make your house feel like a home

The 3 Key Types of Lighting: Overall, Task, and Accent

Just like a great meal perfectly blends several ingredients, a great home combines different styles of light. These are often referred to as **layers**.

- **Overall lighting** is the main illumination of the room. This can include downlights, recessed lights, ceiling fans – pretty much any central light source.
- **Task lighting** is practical lighting designed for a specific purpose. This includes pendant lights over a kitchen bench, downlights over a bathroom vanity, or table lamps for reading.
- **Accent lighting** is used to highlight specific areas of your house. This includes in-cabinet lighting, picture lighting, or any other lighting used to make a feature of your home stand out.



By combining different layers, your living spaces take on much more depth and character. You'll still have bright light where you need it, but you'll also highlight features within your rooms and create a relaxed atmosphere throughout your home.

By planning your lighting early on, it'll ensure you have the correct light switching sequence to instantly change from one lighting style to another. A kids-and-the-dog-playing-everywhere living room can suddenly transform into a fall-asleep-on-the-couch-watching-Netflix sanctuary. All at the press of a button.

Lighting Colours, and Why They Matter

As well as different styles of lighting, you should also pay close attention to the **colour** of your lighting. Different colours create different moods and can even boost focus and concentration. You can combine different colours throughout your home to great effect.

There are three distinct types of light colour: **warm white**, **cool white**, and **daylight**. Each one creates a different feel, tone, and mood within your home.



Many people prefer warmer colour tones, as they're instinctively more pleasing to the eye. However, cooler tones can actually help to improve concentration, productivity, and make it easier to perform tasks that need attention to detail.

Here are some tips to make your lighting choices a little easier:

- **Warm white** replicates the soft glow of sunset, and it's generally the most pleasing to the eye. It creates an inviting, cozy atmosphere which perfectly suits living rooms, bedrooms, and any other areas where you want to feel calm and relaxed.
- **Cool white** produces a brighter, more energetic feel than warm white. It's great for areas that require concentration and focus, such as for reading and homework, cooking, sewing, or hobby work. For these reasons, it's great to use in kitchens, bathrooms, home offices, and garages.
- **Daylight** replicates the colour of sunlight to create a bright space with white and blue tones. It produces the greatest contrast between colours, so it's perfect for tasks like reading, cooking, or applying makeup. Daylight globes are most popular in bathrooms, kitchens, garages, and workshops.

An important thing to note is that you're never locked into one light colour – you can freely mix and match throughout your home. And if you can't decide on a colour (or you and your partner can't agree), then you can purchase tri-colour globes, giving you access to all 3 colours. Ultimately, it's all about what works best for **you**.

Cool white and daylight are great for areas that are busy in the early evenings with homework, preparing dinner, or getting ready to go out. The bright light helps to improve focus and to see everything in clear detail.

The ambience of warm white is perfect for late evenings or weekends when everyone wants to wind down, relax – and still have enough light for reading and other tasks.

Mixing different light colours - combined with different layers of light – allows you to customize the exact look and feel of your living spaces to suit your mood and lifestyle.



When (and How) to Plan Your Lighting

Did we mention how important it is to plan your lighting early? Whether you're building a new home - or renovating an existing one – your lighting plan should be part of the initial process.

There are 3 key steps to make sure you get everything right:

Do Your Research

Visit your local lighting stores to check out the latest fittings and trends. Visit display homes and makes notes about what you like - and what you definitely don't like. Create a collection of lighting ideas - whether it's a scrapbook or the camera roll on your phone. Make use of Pinterest, Instagram, and Google images to discover, explore and lock down exactly what you want.

Talk to the Experts

Establish early on exactly who is responsible for your lighting plan. Is it your builder, your architect, or your electrician? Perhaps you have an interior designer to take care of it? Show them the images of the lighting you want, but also talk with them about your lifestyle, your living habits, and what you want to achieve with your lighting.



Get It on Paper (or iPad!)

Your lighting plan should be drawn up using your house plans, and whoever is designing your lighting can do this for you. The plan will not only show where each light will go, but the location of switches and how many lights will turn on at the same time. If you need any 2 or 3-way switching in your home, now is the time to work this out.

The plan will also show all of your power, data, and TV points – keeping everything together in the one design. A well-defined plan ensures that everyone involved (you, the builder, architect, and electricians) are all playing from the same sheet of music.

If this sounds a bit heavy - don't worry. Your plans can (and will) change during the construction process - it's perfectly normal. But without a defined plan to start with, a small change can suddenly become a massive headache.

The 5 Most Popular Lights – And Where They Work Best

LED Downlights

These are the most common and effective way to light up any room, large or small. BUT – a room lit by downlights alone can end up feeling clinical with no real character.

We strongly recommend that you layer your lighting, to add extra dimension and feeling to your living spaces. Layered lighting allows you to change from bright and evenly-lit, to warm, comfortable, and relaxing at the flick of a switch.

Pendant Lights

We absolutely love pendant lights! Not only do they look great, but they also have a host of other benefits:

- They come in every shape, size, style, and design you can think of.
- They are the perfect way to add personality to a room for a very low cost. (Bunnings actually have a great range of pendant lights to choose from).
- They can add new materials and textures to your space - using concrete, wicker, fabric, and glass.
- They hold a dual purpose - they provide beautiful lighting at night, whilst being an aesthetically-pleasing focal point during the day.

Where are the best places to hang pendant lights?

- **Over the kitchen bench.** Hang them in groups of 3, or if space won't allow, use 2 large pendants instead. They should sit around 70-80cm above the kitchen bench, which gives you an unobstructed view, and a clear workspace.
- **Over the dining table.** If you have a round dining table, try a single statement pendant or a cluster of smaller ones. If your table is rectangular, you can try 2 large pendants at either end of the table, or a linear suspension light.



- **Entranceways with high ceilings, or above stairwells.**

Pendant lights create an inviting and welcoming first impression of your home. Be sure to hang them nice and high, so that you don't block the view to the rest of your house.

- **A bathroom feature light.** Hung directly above your vanity, pendant lights can splash some creativity and warmth against the uniform look of your bathroom tiles.

- **A general Focal Point.** A cluster of small pendants in a corner or pocket of your home forms an interesting and stylish feature all of its own. With different colours, sizes, styles, and materials – you can achieve almost any look you want.



Wall Lights

These are great for setting the 'tone' of your lighting, and they perfectly compliment other layered sources of light. Wall lights are perfect for small spaces where a lamp or pendant lights will obstruct the view.

Wall lights are perfect for:

- **Bedside Lights.** Similar to pendant lights, wall lights can replace the traditional bedside lamp and help create more space.

Our Tip: Be sure to have the light switches within easy reach of your bed!

- **Bathroom Lighting.** Installed symmetrically on either side of your mirror, they distribute light evenly on the sides of your face and avoid the hard shadows created by downlights.



- **Outdoor Front Entry.** Create a warm and welcoming entrance to your house. Wall lights produce a soft, ambient glow that perfectly sets the tone for your home.
- **Hallway.** Accentuate a path or hallway with the repetition of wall lights. They create a soft glow from either side of you which makes for some beautiful aesthetics.

Cabinet Lighting

A very popular trend in recent years, these lights are small, subtle, and highlight spaces both inside and outside of cabinets. They can show off your prized possessions or accentuate corners and shadowy spaces to creating an incredibly textured look.

How to effectively use cabinet lighting:

- **In Cabinets.** Perfect for glass door cabinetry, they'll highlight the inside contents in a bright and dynamic way. If you've got a prized whiskey or wine collection, cabinet lights are the perfect way to show it off in the best possible way. Perfect for kitchens, bar areas, and display cabinets.
- **Under Cabinets.** If your overhead cabinets cast a shadow, these little gems will do the trick. The lights are barely visible during the day, but in the evenings, they bring dark spaces to life. They create incredible accent and depth, giving your home a photogenic look you never thought was possible. Perfect for kitchen, laundries, and home offices.



LED Strip Lighting

Flexible, cost-effective, and versatile - LED strip lights can be cut to size and are perfect for unique spaces. You can install them on both curved and angled surfaces, meaning they can be installed just about anywhere. The lights themselves are not visible during the day, but they provide a beautiful warm wash of light at night.

Where are the best places for LED strip lights?

- Under overhead cabinets – such as kitchens, laundries and bathrooms
- Under your island bench or breakfast bar
- Inside your walk-in wardrobe
- Layered around a false ceiling

3 Other Types of Lighting You Should Consider

Picture Lighting

Illuminate your artwork and create a sense of drama in your home. The light fittings themselves are inexpensive and you can even buy them from Ikea!

- Accented lighting like this will give your house that ‘show home’ look, with very little cost.
- Display your prized artwork or photos in a more interesting and engaging way.
- Position the lights centrally above your artwork, and they’ll light it up three times more brightly than the room.

Backlit Mirrors

These will take your bathroom from standard to Luxe. Backlit mirrors cast no shadows over your face, meaning you’ll always look good in the mirror. Who doesn’t want that?

- With an even source of light, backlit mirrors produce a beautiful soft glow that gives your bathroom a permanent ‘day spa’ feel.
- They also help to create a sense of depth, as they make the mirror appear that it’s floating off the wall.
- And finally - they just look **really, really good**.



Landscape Lighting

This can be a topic all of its own. Lighting up your entranceway, driveway, front gates, patio, garden paths, and pool can make your home the showcase of your street. In the warm Queensland climate, we spend a lot of our time outdoors – and you can make the most of your outdoor spaces by lighting them up in creative ways:



- Lighting up your front gates increases driving safety, but also produces a captivating street-view of your property.
- Install sensor lights on your garage and feel welcomed home every time you pull into your driveway.
- Garden path lighting not only looks incredible, but it also increases visibility and is perfect for small children and pets.

- Put your garden lighting on a timer and forget about turning it on and off every day.
- If you have a pool – bring it to life with underwater lighting. Pool lighting looks incredible – and it allows you to use your pool more often. Who doesn't love a night swim?



So now **the big question** - which room are you going to plan first?

If you're excited at the thought of lighting your home in an interesting and dynamic way,
Dan The Sparky Man is here to help.

With professional designs, expert recommendations, and complete installation, we can take your
ideas and turn them into a beautifully-lit home.

Ready to get the ball rolling? Just get in touch with us.



— Dan the —
SparkyMan

Call **Dan The Sparky Man** on **(07) 5522 4444**

Or email admin@danthesparkyman.com.au