



FCH10-02  
January, 2010

## **Lighting Your Way**

### **Participant Handout**

Day and night, lighting makes a big impact on our daily lives. The kind and amount of light in our surroundings affects how well we do our daily tasks, influence our mood, and will even impact our health. The kind and amount of light is also important to energy efficiency.

Adequate light in an older person's home is necessary to maintain safety, to allow them to fully participate in hobbies and activities and can elevate their mood. As people age, they require more light to safely navigate stairs and uneven surfaces, to read, to see the details of a project they are working on.

Lights are essential for safety. No one should come home to a dark house or enter a dark room to search for the light switch; this can result in tripping, slipping and falling, which is a great hazard for older adults. Many gadgets on the market today make this unnecessary.

Motion, light, touch and sound sensors can be added to existing outdoor and indoor light fixtures. Timers have been around for a while, but newer to the market are remote control devices that can be carried to allow someone to turn on the home's interior lights before entering. These could also be used to turn off and on lighted holiday decorations to save a trip outside or prevent having to crawl behind a decorated tree. Touch lights eliminate the need to fumble for a switch and are recommended next to the bed.

An older person's home should have lights at every step and stair and on the path from the bedroom to the bathroom. Look for lights that shine on the floor rather than into someone's eyes. Flat nightlights that take up little space in a hallway are available; some are battery run for locations without a convenient outlet. Novelty nightlights are available to match every home's color or decorating scheme. Rope lighting is a fun way to light stairs or halls without having to use overhead lights.

Accessible lights in an emergency are a good idea. In the winter we sometimes experience a number of power outages, many during the evening hours. Small flashlights that can be placed around the home for easy access prevent someone from searching in the dark. Also available are emergency flashlights that plug into an outlet to stay constantly charged and come on automatically when the power goes off. Someone inside the home can safely get to the flashlight to remove it from the outlet for use as a handheld flashlight.

Carrying a small flashlight with you in a purse or pocket can be a lifesaver if you are out in the community when the power goes off. Thousands of community members were in stores and restaurants just days before Christmas two years ago when power outages occurred. Not all businesses had working emergency lights and parking lots were difficult to navigate with no street lights on.

It is also a good idea to tuck a nightlight into your suitcase when traveling to use in a hotel room or when staying in someone else's home.

As eyes age, they allow in less light, so a brighter light is needed to see with the same acuity as before. Place bulbs with the highest wattage allowed in each fixture. The maximum wattage that is safe should be noted on the socket cover of each light fixture. Having adequate light makes reading or participating in activities much less of an effort and has been shown to encourage people to stay more active and involved. This in turn, improves people's moods and health.

Most pharmacies, department and home improvement stores have a selection of lighting accessories and equipment. Take time to stop and look at the options and think about what might be beneficial for the people you care about.

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## Evaluate the lighting in your home.

Go through your home and analyze each area in your home. Turn light on and off in both daylight and night time. Open and close curtains when assessing the light. Make notes in the boxes of areas that need some improvement. Consider general, task, and accent lighting. Then prioritize what needs to be changed and get some cost estimates.

Room/ Area	Security/ Safety	Light level	Mood	Health	Activities
Outdoor Entry					
Kitchen					
Dining					
Living					
Hallway/ foyer					
Bedroom 1					
Bedroom 2					
Bedroom 3					
Bathroom 1					

Room/ Area	Security/ Safety	Light level	Mood	Health	Activities
Bathroom 2					
Pathway between bedroom and bath					
Playroom					
Storage					
Garage/ Workroom					
Closets					
Stairs					
Office/study					

## Estimated Cost to Household Comparison: Incandescent Bulbs and Fluorescent Bulbs

Light Output (Lumens)	Bulb Type & Energy Use	Bulb Purchasing Cost <sup>A</sup>	Rated Life (hours)	Energy Cost for 10,000 hrs (at \$0.10/kWh)	Total Cost for 10,000 hours (Bulb + Energy)
800	Incandescent: 60 watts	\$1	1,000	\$60	\$70
	Fluorescent: 15 watts	\$4.50	10,000	\$15	\$19.50
1,200	Incandescent: 75 watts	\$1	1,000	\$75	\$85
	Fluorescent: 20 watts	\$4.50	10,000	\$20	\$24.50
1,750	Incandescent: 100 watts	\$1	1,000	\$100	\$110
	Fluorescent: 25 watts	\$4.50	10,000	\$25	\$29.50

<sup>A</sup> Estimated purchasing costs do not include taxes, shipping, handling fees, recycling fees, or travel expenses associated with acquisition of bulbs at point of purchase, nor do they include additional taxes, fees, or charges required by your utility provider.

Note: Actual light output, bulb cost, and rated life vary by product. Utility rates vary by provider.

From: "Energy Efficient Homes: Fluorescent Lighting" FCS3270, University of Florida, IFAS Extension