



## Outdoor Lighting

### The Facts

*1. Traditionally the main two reasons to install lights around the outside of your home were for safety and security.*

*2. Nowadays outdoor spaces are becoming more a part of the living space within a home and outdoor lighting is taking on a more design oriented role.*

*3. Security lights should be installed in any area of your yard where intruders could hide such as dark or shadowed areas.*

**Different lights create different effects and fulfil different roles. Choose the right light for the purpose.**

### Types of security lights

- Static lighting is lighting controlled by you from inside your home. This is not generally the best form of security lighting as you must already be alerted to an intruder's presence in order to operate the light.
- Passive infra-red/Motion detectors are commonly known as sensor lights, and only come on once movement is detected in the range of the sensor. Give careful consideration to how you position these lights because depending on where the sensor is directed they can be set off by small animals or birds causing constant annoyance.
- Photosensitive lights will come on as darkness falls. They generally only emit a low level of light.

Both sensor lights and photosensitive lights should also be able to be switched on and off manually from inside your home.

Any outdoor security lighting should be aimed down toward the ground so that they only shine on your own property. If they shine on other homes or through neighbours' windows it is actually considered a form of pollution.

Talk to your neighbours to make sure this is not the case and if need be re-direct the light. Your neighbour has the right to complain to local authorities if your lights are causing problems.

## Lighting should enhance the look and feel of your yard.

### Guidance lights

Another function of exterior lighting is to provide guidance for people and vehicles to and within your property.

Gate and fence lighting can be important for visitors and also emergency services who may need to quickly and easily locate your home at night.

Path lighting can be important for safety in guiding visitors to your front door, particularly if your yard is very dark, the direction to the entry is unclear or the walking surface uneven.

Path lights come in a wide variety of forms, types and colours depending on your needs and the design of your garden.

Types include in-ground up lights, wall mounted and stick lights.

Whichever form of path lighting you choose the level of lighting should be consistent for the length of the path and lights should be directed so they don't shine in people's eyes or create glare. The height at which the lights are placed should be the same for the full length of the area lit and the fittings evenly spaced so they don't create areas of shadow.

If there are steps in the pathway they should also be lit. Shadowed areas on the treads can cause a tripping hazard.

Bollards were traditionally used in commercial designs but are now used to highlight driveways and walkways in a residential setting more and more.

As the function of a bollard is usually to delineate the edge of a path or driveway they only emit a low level of light, just enough to assist movement and safety.

### Entry lighting

Good lighting at your front entry is not only essential for security and visitors approaching your home but for your own ease and safety when returning home at night.

If you install a sensor light at your front entry make sure that the timing is set long enough to allow you to reach the door, unlock it and move inside before you are plunged into darkness.

Also ensure that the light can be manually switched on and off from inside your home.

### Lighting for outdoor living spaces

With the modern emphasis on bringing the outdoors in and extending internal living spaces outside, external lighting is considered much more as a design feature rather than purely fulfilling functional requirements.

When selecting outdoor light fittings there are a couple of points to keep in mind. Generally external spaces are larger than internal ones and not enclosed by walls on all sides which reflect light.

This means that a light fitting that is adequate for a lounge room may not provide sufficient light in an outdoor space.

Ensure all outdoor lights are waterproof fittings and, if hard-wired, installed by a registered electrician.

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