

INTO the LIGHT

Optimize your outdoor lighting with these four tips

BY ANDREA COLMAN



As homeowners, we take pride in our homes. So, why put all of your efforts to waste by leaving your home in the dark? Outdoor lighting can be used to highlight your home's architecture, bring depth to the design, and enhance its safety and security. Remember, your home's exterior makes its first impression. Ensure the outside world is seeing it in the right light, with an outdoor lighting plan.

Now, before you go and get intimidated, know that your outdoor lighting plan can be as simple as a few spotlights, or it can be as complex as a fully integrated and automated lighting system. Budget is as varied as the products on the market. Your only boundary is your (or your designer's) imagination. Here are my four key tips to get you started.

1 CHOOSE THE FOCUS

Identify the exterior features that you'd like to draw attention to. These are the focal points. Perhaps it's a water feature, a beautiful tree, or a striking architectural feature. Use lighting to make that special feature "pop."

Soffit lighting is one of my favourites, and it can have quite a dramatic and beautiful effect. Stretch a row of soffit pot lights across your home's front facade and along its roof line, placed every few feet apart. To be more cost-efficient, a few pot lights along the sides of the home may be all that's required.

2 A DIFFERENT LIGHT

Add drama to features or an area of the yard that might not stand out during the day. A simple stone wall can take on a whole new personality at night, when grazed with light and shadow. I love the look of up-lighting a lush tree, or illuminating feature plants in garden beds with a few strategically placed spotlights.

3 SAFETY FIRST

Use lighting to enhance your home's overall function and safety. Feeling around in the dark is not ideal – especially when there are products now to reduce the risk of injury by illuminating stairways and the footpaths, the front entrance, the garage/driveway and deck areas.

Another safety benefit is your home's security. Having well-lit front and rear entrances, garage, and windows can help deter unwelcome visitors.

TIP

Be sure to view your outdoor lighting from a few perspectives within the home. The last thing you want is a spotlight blinding you as you open the front door, or gaze out your kitchen window. Doing this will ensure there are no glaring errors, pun intended.

4 LAYERED LIGHTING

Similar to your indoor lighting plan, your exterior lights should be layered and include a combination of ambient, task and decorative lights. Where do you congregate, socialize and relax? Do you barbecue by evening, or tinker in the garage late into the night? What type of lighting would best accommodate your use of the outdoors?

A detailed lighting plan will bring function, balance and depth to your home, and help you rediscover one of its best features – the outdoors. Look to lighting stores and talk to experts to familiarize yourself with the right products you will need to gear up for a beautiful spring and summer season ahead. Put your outdoor lighting plan into action as it will be the easiest and most cost-effective upgrade with the biggest impact. ♦



All lighting products are available at Dolce Lighting

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