

# Seeing the light

Design consultant, Tracy Leach, thinks we all need some more light in our lives – but only if it's the right kind.

**L**IGHTING a room is one of the most important elements in design. It can make or break a design scheme, as colour, shape, mood and texture can all be affected by lighting.

When deciding on a scheme, think about layering levels of light. Light can be “general”, for everyday use, i.e. standard down lighters or pendant lights; or it can also be “task”, as for reading at a desk or in an armchair, or lighting a picture.

Light also can be “ambient”, i.e. using softly-lit lamps either side of a sofa, or a standard lamp to highlight a dark corner. Kinetic, or “moving” light, can be generated by candlelight or firelight, and provide a focal point or sense of drama.

Once your levels of light are defined, think about “controllability”. Ensure overhead lights can be dimmed, and that table lamps are dimmable and can be switched from the main switch. Rather than down lighters pointing straight down, casting harsh

shadows, ensure they can be tilted at the wall, to give a diffused, softer light. Think of “washing walls with light” and rather than just for general use.

Think also about lighting shelves, and using up lighters above or below cornices to add further drama to a scheme. Low-level footlights can be used to guide you through a space, and highlight doorways.

Kitchen and bathroom lighting should be given special consideration. Kitchen lighting needs to be multi-purpose, i.e. direct lighting for food preparation, concealed lighting above and below cabinetry, and ambient light for dining.

Bathroom lighting must comply with building regulations, but again, think about task lighting and mood lighting. Down lighters above a mirror will cast shadows on the face, and need to be counterbalanced by side lights or up lighters.

If you have a lots of windows in a space, which do not have blinds, e.g. in a conservatory, think about lighting outside in the garden. A beautifully up-lit tree in the garden will draw the eye beyond the conservatory into the garden, and avoid the blank/reflective glare from the glass.

For specialist schemes, see [www.johncullenlighting.co.uk](http://www.johncullenlighting.co.uk).

**AFTER** 12 years in international banking, Tracy Leach decided to take a leap of faith and retrain in interior design. After studying full-time for a year, Icon Interiors Ltd was born, and projects have ranged from one-room makeovers to whole-house renovations. Tracy believes that good design is when you look good in your own environment, so she aims to find the personal style of the client, rather than imposing her particular look or style. She works from home at Overton and can be reached on 01256 770757, or visit [www.iconinteriors.org](http://www.iconinteriors.org)



This kitchen has down lighters for task lighting directly above the work surface, combined with up lighters above the tall cabinets to give a warm, welcoming glow



This slipper chair is highlighted to emphasise the curved form of the chair, and invites you into the space

