

Vision and Light

We all need good levels of light and by the time we reach the age of 80, we will require 4 times as much light as we did when we were 20 years old.

Whilst most people require and benefit from greater lighting, some eye conditions can cause glare problems even in normal lighting levels.

Contrast and light adaptation are two major functions that can be affected by poor lighting and can make tasks difficult and even unsafe to carry out.

Poor vision is a major risk factor of falls amongst the elderly and good lighting at home can help to reduce the risk significantly.

Clinical audit studies have shown that up to 60% of people who fall have particularly poor vision. Previous studies suggest the annual cost of falls to the government could be as much as £981 million and as much as £128 million has been identified as the cost of falls directly attributed to visual impairment.

Surprisingly, most falls take place at home – in the hallway and on stairs and often these areas are the most poorly lit of the house.

Different types of lighting

General Lighting

General lighting provides background (ambient) room lighting allowing us to see objects inside it and move around safely. Ceiling and wall lights help to provide general lighting and can be supported by lamps and of course natural daylight.

Lighting that provides a good amount of light throughout the room as well as having an appropriate appearance should be chosen. Avoid lampshades that cause a shadow in the room and if necessary supplement ceiling lighting with wall lighting. Round lampshades that are white in colour – allowing lots of the light to pass through are ideal.

If you need stronger lighting, ensure it is safe to change to a more powerful bulb before you fit it. Energy saving bulbs are available in a variety of fittings and not all types are available in higher wattage.

Task Lighting

Task lighting is the term given to directional lighting used for detailed activities and tasks such as reading, writing and hobbies such as knitting and sewing. General lighting may not always provide enough light to enable detailed tasks to be carried out comfortably. Reading in dull light will not damage your eyes but it may cause eyestrain and cause difficulty with reading.

Task Lighting should be set up at a short distance from the task (around 2-3 feet). Decide whether you would like a floor standing lamp to keep your desk area clutter free or a small desktop lamp. Portable lamps are also available that can be carried from room to room.

Individuals with poor vision benefit from 'cold white' or preferably 'daylight' bulbs for task lighting. Choose an energy saving bulb of 20 Watts or more (which is equivalent to over 100 watts in tungsten bulbs).

Natural Daylight

Natural daylight is the best type of lighting available. Many people remark how their sight is so much better when they are sitting outdoors, in some cases, even without reading glasses on!

The reason for this is that our eyes are tuned to be most sensitive to the colour of sunlight. Of course, there is usually lots of light outdoors compared to indoors and this makes a world of difference.

Natural light may need to be supplemented by electric lighting depending on the time of the day, weather conditions and the task you wish to see. Don't forget to make use of electric lighting during the day if it is a dull day.

Energy saving light bulbs are available in colour temperatures that mimic daylight. These are very good for task lighting and are highly recommended for people with poor vision.

Lighting around the Home

Kitchen

Ceiling lights will provide general lighting. Ensure that the light falls evenly around the kitchen. Fluorescent tube lights provide high levels of general lighting. If you opt for Halogen spot lights, ensure that you have enough of these to cover the required area.

Shadows on work surfaces can be avoided by fitting under-unit lighting, mounted in a manner that prevents glare.

VISION - HEARING - HEALTH

T: 020 8428 4068 • E: info@homehealthclinic.co.uk • www.homehealthclinic.co.uk

Make use of contrast by ensuring that utensils, crockery and chopping boards show up well against the food types used. For example, chop onions on a dark board; use knives with coloured handles that can be easily identified; place your white plate on a black mat.

Hallway & Stairs

A large number of falls in the elderly take place in the hallway and on stairs. Lighting along the hallway and both at the head and foot of the stairs can reduce the risk of falls and trips. Be careful that no shadows fall onto the stairs and that the lighting is even.

Light bulbs that reach their full brightness quickly are important in this area and consider a bulb with high lumens to ensure your bulb will give out adequate lighting. Turn the light on at the top and bottom of the stairs before entering them.

Lounge

Natural, general and task lighting are all common components of the lounge and should be easily controllable.

Blinds and curtains can keep out too much natural light or can be opened wide when necessary.

General lighting should be even and not cause shadows. Reflecting light from white ceilings is also a good way of increasing the light available whilst reducing direct glare.

Avoid ceiling lampshades that cause shadows, send the light upwards whilst reducing the light downwards.

Task lighting should be stationed in appropriate areas so that it can be controlled easily and quickly. Use directional lamps that allow the direction of light to be varied as required.

Bathroom

General lighting should be even and allow good sight of the bath and shower area, making them easy to climb in and out of.

Mirror lights are an effective way of ensuring you get as much light as needed in important areas.

Ensure that all lighting is safe and appropriate to use inside bathrooms.

Bedrooms

As well as good general lighting from ceiling lights, consider table / task lights next to the bed. These are good for reading in bed and can be used to light the floor before you can reach the light switch for the ceiling light. Small lamps can also be fitted inside cupboards to light up the interior.

Motion controlled LED lights make getting in and out of bed easier. They also provide quick and effective an floor lighting en route to the bathroom.

A guide to buying Lamps

Since September 2012, energy saving light bulbs have completely replaced tungsten bulbs on our shop shelves.

Incandescent (aka tungsten) bulbs were cheaper to buy and cost more to run compared with energy saving bulbs which are a lot more efficient.

Choosing the right light bulb can be tricky. An ideal energy saving bulb will:

- Come on quickly
- Be efficient to run
- Be durable

When deciding which light bulb to purchase, consider the following:

Efficiency: *How efficient the lamp is in using the energy it draws.*

The efficiency of the bulbs will be shown on the packaging and ranges from A to G. The rating format for identifying the efficiency is the same as that applied to household appliances.

A “Class A” bulb is the most efficient, using around a third of the energy of “Class C” bulbs.

Watts: *The energy needed to run the light ie how much power it uses.*
&

Lumens: *Indicates how bright the bulb is*

Most people look at the Wattage of a bulb, however the Lumens actually gives a better indication of how much light a bulb will give.

Lifetime: *How long the bulb should last.*

This is shown in hours where 1,000 hours a year is about three hours of use a day.

Colour temperature: *The colour of the light given out by a light bulb*

The higher the colour temperature the more white (or like daylight) the colour of the lamp is likely to be.

2700k is 'warm white' and similar to a tungsten bulb. These are good for general lighting. 4000k and 6000k are cold white and daylight colours respectively and are useful for task lighting.

Order your Lighting from Home Health Clinic

The Home Health Clinic provides a wide range of light bulbs and lamps for use around the home and in the office. Call us today on 020 8428 4068 to discuss your needs and place your order. We would be happy to discuss the best options for your needs and you can call us today on 020 8428 4068.

VISION - HEARING - HEALTH

T: 020 8428 4068 • E: info@homehealthclinic.co.uk • www.homehealthclinic.co.uk