

HOLIDAY DECORATING | DESIGN ELEMENTS

# CHRISTMAS LIGHTING

**Whether it's your tree or outdoor decorations, the right lighting can really transform a space.**

**T**here are lighting options for every decorating purpose, including various sizes, colors and applications. Finding the right lighting for you depends on how and where you plan to use it.

As with decorations, the perfect time to score low-priced lighting is immediately following the Christmas season. That's when retailers big and small look to clear out their holiday inventory, offering products at deep discounts.

Check in with your locally owned hardware stores first to support the business owners in your own backyard.

## Indoor Lighting

Since you will be living with the lights you choose inside your home, it's important to choose options that won't flood you out. Soft, subtle lighting is the way to go for decorating your interior, while you can get away with brighter options outside.

Look around at your overall design scheme and decide if colored or white lights would look best. Lighting is available in traditional wattage or more efficient LED styles.

Don't just light your tree. Your mantle, window frames and staircase banister all can use a little brightening up in the spirit of the holidays.



## Outdoor Lighting

Sometimes outdoor decorations aren't enough. You have to accentuate them with the proper lighting to really make them stand out. Solar lighting is both versatile and portable, and it can light up your stand-up dis-

play for all hours of the night.

Icicle lights look great hung from your roof line and can also liven up a patio, back deck or even a barn. If you have a nearby power source and are OK with a slightly higher electric bill, nothing is off limits.

## HOLIDAY DECORATING | THE TREE

# THE PERFECT TREE

### The Tree

Start by considering an overall color scheme. For traditionalists, traditional colors like red, green, white, gold and silver never get old. Always start tree-decorating with lights, followed by garlands and then ornaments..

### The Stand

An average-size tree requires a stand with a base of about 20 inches in diameter and it should hold at least a gallon of water. Before securing the tree in its stand, cut one-half inch off the base. A fresh cut reopens the pores that take up water.



### The Topper

Stars and angels are classic tree toppers. For something more unusual, consider faux antlers or a thick satin ribbon tied in a bow.

### The Lights

When stringing lights, start at the bottom of the tree and work up. To make taking down the lights easier divide the tree into three vertical sections, and then run the lights through the interior and exterior of the branches to add depth to the design. Consider using LED lights, which burn up to 80-percent less energy and give off less heat.

### The Garland

An average-sized tree (6 to 7 feet) will typically use 60 feet of garland. Create homemade garland out of beads, faux pearls, knotted twine or rope, colorful buttons and satin ribbon. Keep the garland approximately half an inch thick for an elegant look that won't overwhelm the tree.

### The Ornaments

To give the tree depth, ornaments should be hung toward the inside of the tree and on the branch ends. Place them where they won't touch the branch below. Keep from overcrowding by exercising restraint and occasionally stepping back to see the tree as a whole. Use ornaments that match the theme or color scheme, or personalize the tree with homemade decorations. Create ornaments using a glue gun and string to hang family photos, baby shoes or old toys like Matchbox cars.