

People over 50 may have special lighting needs.

Choose light fixtures that ...

- Provide enough light.
- Feature light bulbs that are easy to change.
- Are easy to reach and use. Try turning fixtures on/off or dimming before purchasing.

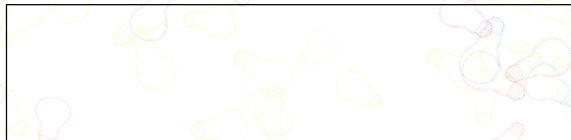
Consider light location

- Uneven light and shadows can create “trip and fall” hazards. Multiple lights in different locations help to lessen shadows.
- Seniors often have trouble with depth perception. Consider lighting for staircases and other changes in elevation.
- Place lighting in key locations inside and outside your home. Consider both ambient and task lighting needs.

Shield the light to avoid glare

- Avoid bare, unshielded light bulbs as these produce glare.
- Fixtures should have a shade or lens that is easy to remove when changing bulbs.
- Translucent shades and lenses help to limit glare and improve the quality of light.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?
PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL EXTENSION OFFICE:



SOURCES:

American Association of Retired Persons- Outreach and Service. (2004). Home Safety, Room Lighting, Efficient, Green Light Bulbs. *AARP*. Retrieved from http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/home-improvement/info-02-2004/house_lighting.html
American Association of Retired Persons- Education and Outreach. (2008). Living Room and Bedroom Safety Checklist for Aging in Place. *AARP*. Retrieved from http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/home-improvement/info-11-2008/bedroom_checklist.html
DiLaura, D. L., Houser, K., Mistrick, R., & Steffy, G. (Eds.) (2011). *The lighting handbook: reference & application* (10th ed.). New York, NY: Illuminating Engineering Society of North America.
Illuminating Engineering Society of North America. (2007). *Lighting and the visual environment for senior living*. New York: Author.
Gray-Micelli, D. (2008). Want to know more: Falls. *Geriatric Nursing Resources for Care of Older Adults*. Retrieved from http://consultgerim.org/topics/falls/want_to_know_more
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service. (2004). *Bone health and osteoporosis: A report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: Author.

AUTHORS:

Paulette Hebert, Ph.D.

Professor
Design, Housing, & Merchandising

Gina Peek, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Extension Specialist
Housing & Consumer Issues

Mihyun Kang, Ph.D.

Associate Professor
Design, Housing, & Merchandising

REVIEWERS:

Tommy Edwards

Oklahoma Consumer; Retired Educator

Janna Kelley

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

Kenneth Tremblay

Colorado State University

Lani Vasconcellos

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

GRAPHIC DESIGN:

Sylvia Chaney

TEXT LAYOUT:

Jessy Kramp



L-419

Oklahoma State University, in compliance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other federal laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Robert E. Whitson, Director of Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. This publication is printed and issued by Oklahoma State University as authorized by the Vice President, Dean, and Director of the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and has been prepared and distributed at a cost of \$1.00cents per copy. 1012

Electric Lighting, Vision, and Aging Eyes

CHOOSING LIGHTING IS
AN IMPORTANT DECISION
FOR OLDER ADULTS.



you
can make
appropriate lighting choices
for older adults!

Important Information:

How much light? Older adults usually require more light to see than younger individuals. Consider quantity, quality, and location of light. More light is needed when reading materials with smaller font size, on colored (non-white) backgrounds or with colored text (non-black).

Good lighting can assist older adults so they may perform tasks (reading, walking, etc.) more easily. Good lighting can also help to reduce tripping and falling.

When Thinking of Lighting for Older Adults, *Consider...*

Initial Cost: How much will the light cost when you first buy it? Be sure to purchase lighting fixtures from a reputable manufacturer.

Installation Cost: How much will the wiring and electrician's labor cost? Keep in mind that solar powered fixtures for outdoor lighting have low installation costs.

Energy Cost: How much will the energy use cost? Energy costs vary for bulbs. Consider using energy efficient light emitting diodes (LEDs) or fluorescent bulbs.

Location: An "even wash" of light at key outdoor locations is best. Consider lighting to meet your needs at entry doors, and in front, back, and side yards. Also consider lighting outbuildings on your property including garages and barns.

Controls: Manual and automatic activation options include switching, bi-level switching, timers, motion detectors, and dimming systems. Indoors, automatic controls can save on energy costs because they only energize lights when needed!

Safety: Locate light fixtures for easy servicing. Avoid locating fixtures in high ceilings. Fixtures in high ceilings may require using ladders. Using a ladder when changing light bulbs may increase the risk for falls. Instead, consider task lights located near reading, sewing, and other visually challenging or important tasks. Turn these on only as needed.

Items to discuss with your electrician:

- How convenient and accessible are the controls selected? Where will you locate the controls? Avoid "rotary" dimmers; these are more difficult to turn with arthritic hands than "sliding" dimmers.
- Consider placing controls at a height that is comfortable for wheelchair users.
- You may want to override the automatic controls for your exterior lights from inside your home.

Remember... More and brighter lights do not necessarily create good lighting for older adults.
Lighting fixtures' ease of use, ease of maintenance, locations, and controls must be carefully considered!