

Lighting

Good lighting in your home can help you make the best use of your vision.

This leaflet is also available on audio CD and online.

**You don't have to face macular disease alone.
For the best information and support call us on
0300 3030 111.**

Good lighting at home is important, particularly if you have poor vision. Light becomes more important as we age. By the age of 60 we need three times more light than in our 20s. If you add a sight loss condition to this the figure can double. Therefore a 60 year old with sight loss will need approximately six times more light than a sighted 20 year old.

There are three types of lighting: Natural daylight, general lighting and task lighting.

Natural daylight

It is important to make the most of natural

daylight, but it can be very changeable and sometimes cause glare so may need to be controlled when indoors.

- Open curtains wide and keep windows clean.
- Remove net curtains.
- It is easier to control the direction of light coming into a room with vertical blinds, rather than Venetian blinds.
- Use horizontal blinds such as roller blinds to control the amount of light coming in and to prevent it shining in your eyes.
- Blue blocker filter lenses in glasses can

improve contrast and reduce glare. For more information please refer to our 'Protecting your eyes' leaflet.

General lighting

General lighting needs to be bright and even and not cause glare. Try to make the lighting similar in all rooms so that you don't have to adjust to new light levels as you move about the home.

Well-lit halls and stairs are important safety considerations. Leaving hall lights on can help with safe movement around the home at night.

Tips for effective lighting

- Have several lights in a room rather than one bright light and position them to get an even spread of light with no dark corners.
- Shade bulbs so that they do not shine into your eyes. Check the maximum bulb rating for light shades to make sure you use the correct bulbs.
- Round paper shades are good at diffusing light in the room. Avoid using lampshades or spotlights where you can see the bulb.
- Use uplighters to

bounce light onto the ceiling and back into the room.



- Spotlights are effective for lighting specific areas in a well-lit room but can cause confusing bright and dark patches and glare if used in isolation.
- Dimmer systems can be used to vary the amount of light needed.
- Use colour and contrast for light switches to

make them stand out.

- Paint walls in matt pale colours to reflect light into a room.

Light bulbs

Traditional tungsten light bulbs have been phased out because they get hot and use a lot of energy. New low-energy efficient bulbs get bright very quickly, are cost efficient to run and come in a range of brightness levels, shapes and fittings.

Types of light bulbs

- LED lights are now available as a 'bulb' version or in a 'strip' light format similar

to the traditional CFL strip light.

- Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) offer instant, crisp, bright light. They tend to be more expensive than other products but can save money as they are long-life and energy efficient.
- Compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) are fluorescent tubes curved or folded into various shapes and compact enough to suit a range of light fittings. They are energy efficient and long-life bulbs. They may take time to reach full brightness but

there are ‘quick start’ products that warm up faster. Unfortunately most CFLs can’t be used with standard dimmer switches.

- Fluorescent tubes produce less heat and use less energy. A single, long straight type of this bulb is often used in the kitchen. Replacing these with multiple lights will provide more even light.
- Halogen lighting produces a very bright light but gets extremely hot. Avoid the narrow beam spotlights. Be careful when changing

halogen bulbs; use a cloth – the natural oil on skin will damage the bulb. Halogen lighting is cheap and provides instant brightness but isn't

as energy efficient as CFLs or LEDs.

The brightness of the bulb is measured in Lumens. The higher the Lumen the brighter the light.

Light bulb ratings

An old **60W bulb** is roughly equivalent to a:

- 15W CFL (compact fluorescent tube)
- an 8W LED (light emitting diode)
- and around 800 Lumens

An old **100W bulb** is roughly equivalent to a:

- 27W CFL
- an 18W LED
- and around 1550 Lumens.



Colour temperature

Light bulbs come in a variety of colours, or light temperature. This is measured in Kelvin. The lower the K the warmer or yellower the light will appear, the higher the K the

cooler or whiter the light will appear.

For areas where ambience is the priority, such as living rooms and dining rooms warmer light temperatures are often preferred.



Under-cupboard kitchen lighting

Where function is the priority, higher light temperatures are often preferred.

Task lighting

Extra lighting is needed for activities like reading, preparing food or other close work.

Effective task lighting can really help. It can:

- be helpful in the kitchen. Under-cupboard lighting can be very effective for lighting work surfaces
- make reading easier by improving the contrast of text on the page
- make it easier to identify colours

- help to break through mistiness in vision
- reduce the amount of magnification needed.

Task lamps need to be positioned in front of you but not shining into your eyes, shining on the task and below eye level. They should be stable to avoid getting knocked over and bulbs should stay cool to avoid discomfort or even burning yourself.

When buying a task lamp consider:

- What activities do you want it for?
- Would a table-top, floor-standing or

wall-mounted one be best?

- How easy is it to adjust its position to get the light where you need it?
- Does the shade stop the light shining directly into your eyes when the lamp is positioned below eye level?

The amount of light needed varies from person to person. To find the right level for you, start with the task light further away from the object you need to see and then move it closer slowly until you find the amount of illumination comfortable for you. Halving the distance between an

object and the light will create four times more light on the object.

If you are using a magnifier with a task lamp, keep the magnifier parallel to the light so that you look through it onto a well-lit object. Don't put the magnifier under the light because this causes annoying reflections and pools of light on the object.

Keep some background light on when using task lighting to reduce glare and fatigue.



Beating Macular Disease

Macular disease is the biggest cause of sight loss in the UK, with around 300 people diagnosed every day.

The Macular Society is the only charity

determined to beat the fear and isolation of macular disease with world class research, and the best advice and support.

Our research programme is focused on finding new treatments and a cure

to Beat Macular Disease forever. To support people affected by macular disease now, the Macular Society provides a range of support, information and services:

The Advice and Information Service (0300 3030 111) is available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Alternatively, you can email help@macularsociety.org

Our **website** provides a wide range of information and resources for people affected by macular disease. You can also find out more about the services we offer.

Visit it at **macularsociety.org**

Our network of over **400 Macular Society Support Groups** stretches across the UK. Each one offers practical and emotional support for people with macular disease, from those living with it today.

Find your local group at **macularsociety.org/groups**

We provide a free, confidential **Counselling Service** over the phone. Call the Advice and Information Service for more information.

Working with you to Beat Macular Disease:

- We provide the best advice and information on living with macular disease.
- Macular Society Support Groups can help you to beat the isolation of macular disease, by connecting you with other local people who know what you're going through – offering support and companionship.
- Our research programme is focused on finding new treatments and a cure to Beat Macular Disease forever.

Macular Society

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