

# BATHROOM LIGHTING

## Let there be light

*Of all the rooms in the house, the bathroom requires the most flexible lighting scheme. It should be bright enough to enable you to apply make-up, but you don't want to take a relaxing bath under a white fluorescent light. It must also be safe.*

“Different forms of lighting can be used to completely transform the look and ambience of a bathroom — from a bright and functional area to a softly lit, relaxing spa-like space. In fact, a cleverly designed and thought out lighting design can offer you the best of both,” explains Melissa Davidson from The Lighting Warehouse.

“If you are completely redoing your bathroom, you will need to plan your lighting so that the necessary electrical work can be done at the building stage. Walls may need chasing to allow wires to be concealed. However, if you are working with existing electrics, you can still use them to your advantage by changing the types of light fittings you have,” she explains.

### Different functions

She notes that in any bathroom, natural light should contribute at least 10% of the room's general light, and that different types of light fittings can be used to complement the natural light and accomplish various different tasks:

- **Ambient lighting** provides general all-over illumination, supplied by wall- or ceiling-mounted fixtures, as well as natural sources of light from windows and skylights.
- **Task lighting** is required to highlight specific areas for certain functions, like the mirror for shaving or applying make-up.
- **Accent lighting** can be used to create specific effects, highlighting a particular architectural detail or any other interesting aesthetic feature in a room.
- **Decorative lighting** is used to create certain moods, set the atmosphere and complement the decor of the room.



*An extractor fan is good for removing steam from the bathroom and protecting your electrical components. These extractors from The Lighting Warehouse are available in two sizes — 200mm-diameter (code 650) for R349,95, and 250mm-diameter (code 651) for R399,99.*

## Press Release



*These bathroom heater/light/extractor fan combo units are available from Lighting Warehouse. They come in two-light (white: R799,95, chrome: R999,95) and 4-light (white: R999,95) options, and are available in white and chrome. Specifically designed to be installed in the bathroom ceiling, they are purpose-built for steamy areas, are rust-proof and each of the three functions operate independently.*



### Different types

“Fluorescent, halogen and LED (light emitting diode) fixtures in the ceilings and wall-fittings provide the majority of the lighting in most bathrooms,” explains Davidson:

- **Fluorescent lights**, including CFLs (compact fluorescent lights) are energy efficient, last longer and they are more affordable. The bulbs can last as much as 10 times longer than incandescent or halogen bulbs. “The standard objection to fluorescent fixtures is that they hum or flicker, and that the light is not flattering visually. Both these objections are easily overcome however — choose bulbs that use a high-frequency electronic ballast to eliminate the hum or flicker,” advises Melissa. CFLs come in warm and cool white light and in a host of sizes and shapes — your choice depends on what function you are requiring.
- **Halogen lighting** provides crisp, white light. Low voltage options are available, making them good energy efficient options, but more costly to replace.
- **LED lighting** — LEDs are the future, however at this early stage the most affordable way is to install LED downlighters. You could also try an LED candle globe in your bathroom mirror light. LEDs are also available in warm or cool white colours.

## Different styles

Davidson says that there is a wide variety of bathroom light fittings to choose from today, and each can be used to complement a host of different bathroom styles. Here are some options:

- Wall lights usually have an enclosed glass shade or diffuser making them suitable for bathrooms, they are available in many styles and colours, from traditional to modern, and they provide a soft all-round glow.
- Recessed lights can be positioned in the wall, ceiling or floor. If recessed into the ceiling, they can provide a fixed beam of light or have a movable eyeball-effect, which can be directed to highlight specific areas
- Spot lights can create pools of concentrated light.
- Down lighters can be used to achieve a variety of effects. The fittings are neat, functional and unobtrusive and create a focused beam of light, and you can angle the light at different degrees.
- Up lighters are very effective for enhancing architectural features. The ceiling reflects the beam of light and disperses it so that glare and shadows are reduced. The shade is often a semi-transparent material such as opaque glass which offers a soft, diffused light.

## Safety in the bathroom

Certain safety precautions need to be considered when choosing and installing bathroom lighting, says Davidson: "Any lighting equipment in the bathroom will be exposed to water, steam and condensation, and since electricity and water can be a fatal mix, it is paramount to consider safety first, over and above functionality and aesthetics. Bathroom fittings must be completely encased to avoid shorting and electric shocks, and double insulated with the bulb and all metal parts covered. Light switches must be either outside the bathroom or fitted with a pull cord."

Since the risk of electric shock is greater in the presence of water or moisture, Davidson notes that if you want to sell your home, you will not be able to qualify for an electrical compliance certificate if you have not installed water- and splash-resistant light fittings in your bathroom. She also says that normal electric socket outlets and therefore, free-standing or portable light fittings are not permitted in bathrooms at all.

"Remember to consider ventilation when designing your bathroom — good ventilation is essential to allow the moisture and steam to be dispersed, which reduces the risk of electric shock. The Lighting Warehouse supplies a variety of extractor fans, as well as bathroom heater combo units that come with built-in extractor fans and provide lighting and warmth with infra red globes. The infra red globes provide light at 275W. These units offer three useful functions in one unit — offering a streamlined and space-saving aesthetic. They come with a switch, which allows individual operation and control of each of the three functions," concludes Davidson.

## Bathroom lighting tips

Melissa Davidson from The Lighting Warehouse offers the following useful tips for successful bathroom lighting:

- If you only have a harsh central light, one of the easiest ways to create instant ambience is to ask an electrician to fit a dimmer switch just outside the bathroom door.
- Replace existing fittings with frosted glass ones for a softer diffused light.

- Stud the ceiling with several spotlights or downlighters, which wash the walls with light.
- To illuminate the bathroom mirror, you can install specially designed light fittings around it, which will offer an even light from all sides.
- Put all the lights on different switches so you can alter the mood - for shaving you could use the lights round the mirror and a wall light, but when you're in the bath, you could switch off all the lights, except for the wall light, dim it right down and add a few candles for a more relaxing atmosphere.
- Make sure you can see when you're in the shower with the cubicle door shut - try fitting a low voltage waterproof light inside the shower area.
- You may want to consider a Sensor Switch for your guest loo — a light switches on when it detects movement and remains on for adjustable periods of time. They are programmed to turn on only when light levels are low, making them excellent energy savers.
- Installing under-counter lighting to illuminate the interiors of bathroom cupboards is a very practical idea — it will make finding things in otherwise dark areas a breeze.



*This bathroom mirror light from Lighting Warehouse is specifically designed to offer task lighting around the vanity mirror. It is available in three sizes (small: 350mm, R199,95 (code 12144); medium: 500mm, R279,95 (code 8559); and large: 700mm, R379,95 (code 9790)) and can be installed horizontally above the vanity mirror, or two can be installed vertically on either side of the mirror. They boast a frosted white glass body, with satin chrome clips.*



*Steam (code 1055) is a fully-enclosed light fitting that is purpose-built for bathroom applications and it is available in two sizes — 300mm-diameter (R279,95) and 400mm-diameter (R399,95). It has a diameter of 300mm, and the cover is made from frosted glass, making it an ideal choice for diffused ambient lighting. The satin chrome underplate is rust-proof and the fitting can be installed on either the bathroom ceiling or the walls.*