12 Ways to Increase Natural Light in Your Home

There are lots of good reasons to lighten up your living space. Increasing natural light in your home can reduce the amount of energy you use for artificial lighting during daytime hours. That means it's greener and cheaper to go lighter. Adding light can also give an interior space a sense of greater volume and a fresher, more appealing look. Plus, it just feels good to be in a light, airy space. It's revitalizing. So, it's no surprise that today's home buyers list an abundance of natural light as a primary feature they want in a home.

But, figuring out how to increase natural light in a room and making the necessary changes may seem like too big an undertaking. Actually, there are many simple things you can do to transform your home into a lighter, brighter place. Here are some ways you can make easy adjustments or replacements, do quick DIY projects, or have small professional installation projects performed, to increase the natural light in your home:

1. Change to Lighter Window Treatments

Trade heavy drapes for sheer window treatments. Add hooks and draws, so you can tie back sheers in the day to let in the light and take in the view. Or, update to a sleeker, more modern, even minimalist look with white or light-colored blinds. This option allows you ideal control over the amount of light coming in, and provides very well for privacy, even when blinds are down but turned open. Blinds also block direct sunlight and help reduce heat on hotter days.

2. Use Furniture and Accessories that Reflect Light

Replacing dark furniture, rugs, lampshades, toss pillows and blankets, artworks and other decorative accents with versions in lighter colors can transform a dreary room into a bright, inspiring environment. Even replacing electronics housed in black or gray casings with silver or other lighter metallic versions helps a lot to lighten the look. Switch out deeper colors of fresh flowers for livelier varieties, and solid vases for translucent or clear ones.

3. Place Mirrors Across from Windows

Mirrors have long been used by interior decorators and savvy homeowners to give spaces the illusion of being twice as large as they really are. Putting mirrors on walls opposite from windows or glass doors can also create twice the amount of light in a room. You'll have the sunlight coming in the window *and* instead of that light being absorbed into a colored wall, art piece, cabinet, etc. across from the window, the light is reflected back into the room from the mirror.

4. Use a Lighter Color Scheme

Light colors naturally reflect light, and darker shades absorb it. Paint ceilings and walls in light colors, to reflect existing light, instead of absorbing it. Use lighter tones for hardwood floor finishes or floor tiles. Choose lighter floor and window trims, and use satin finishes instead of flat, to increase light reflection.

5. Paint Awnings or Replace Covers

Window awnings can block too much natural light from entering a room. Paint undersides of overhangs white or in a very light shade. Replace cloth awnings with white vinyl or aluminum, for a brighter view looking out the window, and much greater light reflection helping brighten the inside of your living space. Undersides of awnings face into the windows, so there's no negative impact to your home's curb appeal from changing the color on that bottom side and leaving the top sides as-is.

6. Choose Lighter Kitchen and Bath Features

Switch kitchen and bathroom backsplashes and countertops for lighter surfaces. Even changing lighting and plumbing fixtures, ceiling fans, and cabinet handles from dark to lighter metal finishes can make a difference by reflecting more existing light. In bathrooms, choose shower wall tiles in lighter tones, and even hang lighter shower curtains, and bath and hand towels. In the kitchen, even try lighter colored dishes and cookware. Add a bouquet of brightly colored flowers in transparent or light vase, and maybe even keep a clear bowl of brightly colored fresh fruit on display in the kitchen.

7. Change to Larger Windows

Replace undersized windows or doors on spacious wall areas to picture windows or bay windows with seating, to maximize natural light in your room. Or, add radius or transom windows above your existing windows to increase light and maintain privacy. If you can't enlarge the window opening, you can still increase the amount of sunlight coming in by switching to window styles with narrower frames.

8. Swap Solid Doors for Glass Doors

Switch a light-blocking solid exterior door with one that is partially or all glass. If you have the wall space, and interior and exterior ground space that makes sense for a larger door, go with a sliding glass door, French doors, or even a folding glass wall, to transform the space into a veritable sunroom. Or, add a window above the door, to make a budget-friendly and stylish upgrade and illuminate the entry space. Or, add attractive sidelights along the sides of your home's front door, for unique, energy-free lighting in your entry space

9. Trim Trees Shading Windows

More tree shade and other growth can filter too much of the sunlight from coming through your windows. Many people who like airy interior spaces with lots of natural light also like having beautiful trees and an abundant landscape surrounding their homes. Plus, trees near windows cut energy bills and help curb appeal. Still, around windows where you want more light, and where don't need to sacrifice too much in other benefits of having heavily shaded windows, trim branches and shrubbery that blocks too much natural light, or replace some landscaping with shorter plants.

10. Add Light and Flair with Skylights

One of the many styles of skylights can provide the perfect solution for saving on energy use in bathrooms and kitchens, where you always need abundant light. Have professional installation, for leak-free lighting. Your installer will cut a hole in your roof, construct a well for the skylight and install an amazing new light source for you. Today's models are not leaked-prone, as the notorious older models were. If you're wondering how to lighten a dark room with no natural light, for lower levels of your home, or for homes with smaller roofs, solar tubes offer an excellent, highly versatile and economical alternative.

11. Stylize Wall Expanses.

If your taste runs retro, you may like the idea of replacing a wall section with glass blocks. Or, you may install some etched or leaded glass pieces in walls, ceilings, or solid exterior doors, or along sides of doors. These are popular for keeping with classic architectural styles alive in remodels. They may be ideal options for bringing in natural light and preserving privacy and security in, especially dark spaces, like basements or along exterior walls adjacent to other buildings that block sunlight.

12. Clean the Windows

It's not a glamorous or even a creative idea. In fact, it probably seems too obvious. However, it's easy to assume there isn't enough dirt on the windows to make a noticeable difference in the amount of light coming in. But, all the dirt you see on your window cleaning cloth, after wiping down any given window, has been blocking light from coming into your rooms. Cleaning windows more frequently ensures that as much sunlight as possible can shine through to illuminate your living spaces.

Enjoy Living Lighter!

Incorporating interior design elements and décor to achieve optimum natural light for house or business spaces can do more than help you see better inside your living or work space. It can elevate your sense of wellbeing, reduce energy costs, improve your quality of life, and help you live greener.

A good rule of thumb for creating a light-lover's environment is to paint or replace dark-colored items with lighter versions and increase the amount of glass on exterior surfaces. Beyond that, go all-in on nice weather days — throw open the doors and windows, and really bring the outside in!

To Replace or Add Windows to Your Home:

Energy Shield Window & Door Company has been providing energy-efficient doors and windows designed specifically for the Arizona climate for more than two decades. We manufacture and install everything we sell. Our professional installers are all industry certified. Energy Shield is an Earthwise Member, a licensed general contractor, and a member of Better Business Bureau (A+ Rating).

For more information about window replacements or additions to bring more natural light into your home, contact Energy Shield Window & Door Company at (623) 792-9119. Or, visit our website for lots of general information about our beautiful windows and door selections.

See our specials, and ask about our 0% financing (for approved credit). We speak English and Spanish.