

# 10 Tips to Maximize Your Outdoor Security Lighting Efforts!

The goal you are probably trying to accomplish with your outdoor security lighting is to make your home safer from unwanted intruders, right? A dark home is a vulnerable home! Security lighting around your home gives you much more of a chance to be overlooked by a burglar, making them move on to an easier target. While proper security lighting is important to home security, don't forget that it's only just a part of things you can do to keep yourself, your family and your home safe. But for our purposes here, I'll just discuss your outdoor security lighting and give you the Top 10 tips to maximize your outdoor security lighting!

## 1. Positioning - Areas

To get the most out of your security lighting, make sure all of your bases are covered. You want to make sure you have enough lighting that there aren't large blind spots around your property. **Many, not-as-bright lights do a much more effective job than one really bright one.** The more blind spots you have around your yard, the easier you are making it for the burglar. You have to consider more areas of your yard than just the obvious ones. And even then, some people miss some of the obvious ones...

## 2. Security On All Sides

You want to make sure the main areas of your home have proper lighting. Your doors and main pathways are the biggest areas to consider. But a lot of people only ever think about the front of their house. The front yard is all that most people see, but that's the least likely place for a burglar to be! **Make sure that not only is the front of your house covered, but the back yard as well, and along the sides of your house.** It is just a smart idea to have some sort of lighting at any entryway into your home; front, back and/or along the sides. Not only to scare off intruders but to aid you at night.

## 3. Positioning - Placement

**Ideally, you want your security lighting up higher off of the ground, shining downwards to cast a big area of light.** Lights closer to the ground tend to not cover as big of a radius. The light that comes down will be softer by the time it hits the ground, meaning there will be less blind spots in your yard created by shadows. It is also much easier to overlap lighting to get full coverage. The lower to the ground, the more lights that would be needed for this effect.

But don't go too high. The higher up the light is, the brighter of a light you will need. You need to find the balance of high enough and not too high, which really depends on how bright your light is, how much you need it to light and what structures you have in your yard to mount the lights on. **Placing lights up high aimed downwards also helps to reduce the amount of light pollution you are producing with it.**

## 4. Security for Your Security Lighting

Your security lighting is meant to protect you --- but who protects it? **You want your lighting put up high because it is harder for intruders to tamper with them then.** Intruders can, and will, also cut your power to make sure that they can slip in unnoticed. Make sure that your wires are in areas that are harder to access, and that any power boxes you have also have their own security lighting to ward off people with intent to vandalize your security lighting. Another option for this is to use solar powered security lighting. They can be much more difficult to tamper with if they are installed up high because there are no wires coming low enough to be cut.

## 5. Maintenance

**Don't make it easy on your intruders by disabling your own lights!** You must make sure you have a proper maintenance routine to keep your lights working at their best. You will want to replace any burned out bulbs as quickly as you can. You need to check on them frequently to make sure all of the bulbs are good. Also, since they are going to be outside, they are going to quickly collect dirt and dust that is flying about in the wind. You'll want to clean off your security lights regularly to keep the light shining optimally.

## 6. Be Glare Free

The biggest mistake a lot of people make when using outdoor security lighting is that they think they can just use a few really bright lights and that will deter burglars. That kind of approach has the opposite effect actually! **A really bright light casts a lot of shadows, which is where burglars like to hide.** And if there is only a couple of really bright lights, then there are a lot of areas of your home that are probably still dark. That's a lot of freedom for the would-be intruder. Bright lights that are on all of the time can actually have the opposite effect of letting the burglar see exactly what they are doing! **It gets worse when they are also improperly shielded; causing a lot of glare. Burglars love glare.** People don't want to look directly at lights because it hurts the eye. So if your lights glare into your neighbor's eyes, they aren't going to ever be looking that way. A burglar can easily then sneak their way by behind the curtain of light! **So make sure that you have proper shielding for your lights, and also angle them away from others.** This is another reason why putting lights up higher, aiming them at the ground, is a good idea.

## 7. White or Clear Bulbs

Colored lighting is beautiful, no doubt about it. But colored lights aren't very good for security purposes. White or clear bulbs are the best way to go. They produce a much brighter, cleaner light. Colored lights tend to also distort facts, such as changing the color of the clothes the burglar is wearing. You want to use white or clear lights so that you or anyone of your neighbor's can accurately describe the person caught in the lights.

## 8. Turn the Lights Off

It may seem a bit counter productive to say "turn the lights off" at first, but do hear me out. First off, as mentioned above in tip #6, bright lights that are on all of the time can actually help the burglar by allowing them to easily see what they are doing at night. Remember, burglars are human too. The human eye takes a little bit of time to adjust to the darkness, and then likewise to the light if a light were to suddenly come on. This is why motion sensor lights are so popular for security lighting. When someone has the intention to sneak into your home, they are going to be on edge. They are ready to bolt at the first sign of trouble. If you have a light that is triggered by motion or heat, and they set it off, they are much more likely to run out of pure fear. If a burglar is sneaking in the shadows and is suddenly bathed in bright light, anyone who is around is going to easily be able to see the intruder if you are using nice, bright, clear or white lights.

## 9. Routine

Any burglar who is experienced in the least will take their time, scouting out your house before they go to hit it, especially since it means they will probably have familiarized themselves with where your lighting is and, even worse, what your routine is. They will try to pick the optimal time to strike: when no one is home. **By using timers, you can turn lights on and off at different times. This can give the illusion of them being turned on manually, so it works best with non-motion activated lights.** This is a step commonly taken on the lighting inside of your home, but can be effective with outside lighting as well, especially if you use the two in conjunction. Burglars have that adrenalin pumping through their veins because they are doing something they know they are not supposed to. If something happens that they weren't expecting, they are more likely to think they made an error in their planning and take off.

## 10. Lights Not Specifically For Security

Experienced burglars are probably very well aware of all of the different kinds of security lighting and the ways that you will be using them to try to deter their attack, which is why the last tip is a really strange one. Try to not focus all of your security lighting efforts on lights specifically for security! It'll definitely make you a bit red in the face if you've spent all this time, effort and money on tons of great security lighting only to have an experienced burglar slip completely around it. **Outdoor accent lighting may not be as bright or as focused as that flood light you are using for security, but it may work even better.** The softer light, but still enough by which to see, will provide enough visibility for you or your neighbors to see if something is creeping around. Also, lights that are specifically for your benefit can very easily double as a security light. Porch or post lights in your yard can be used to quickly identify threats coming while still serving their original purpose of helping you find your way home after dark.