

DECORATING WITH NATURAL LIGHT IN YOUR HOME

Light From Above Adds Style While Benefiting Young And Old

The benefits of having abundant daylight in our homes are well documented. Studies show that students learn better, adults suffer less Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), and older Americans have less trouble reading and moving around safely when rooms are filled with natural light. But aside from documented psychological and physical benefits, it's obvious that living and working in a naturally brightly lit space just makes life feel better.

Who says? If you could choose between a gloomy, dark environment and a bright, well-lit one, which would it be?

Joe Patrick, senior product manager with VELUX America, points out that natural light comes into most homes through "vertical fenestration" openings including doors and windows. "If there are enough of them, and if they are placed properly, they can do an adequate job of admitting light," Patrick says.

"But if you want to add beauty, style and better lighting to your home, while lifting your spirits as you visually expand your rooms, consider the additional natural light that can be provided by skylights," he says.

Priscilla Ulmann, founder of the New York design firm, Scott-Ulmann, Inc., agrees. "I love the drama of skylights. There's nothing like walking into a room drenched in natural light with a view to the sky," she says.

Light from above makes all rooms more functional and livable. Our kitchens become more enjoyable for our family when they are bright, cheerful and free of cooking odors and heat and when moisture is allowed to escape (through venting skylights).

In our baths, we can have a degree of privacy impossible to achieve with vertical windows. And we can free an extra wall for storage or decorating where that window is now that must be kept covered when the bathroom is in use.

While considering the "feel good" reasons for adding light from above throughout our homes, there are also economic considerations. When we're enjoying the new functionality of rooms filled with natural light, we can know that we've made a good decision from an energy efficiency standpoint, as well.

When converting upstairs areas with ENERGY STAR® qualified skylights or roof windows, expensive dormers aren't necessary, so labor and materials costs can be reduced. And finished attics and bonus rooms typically appraise at 100 percent of the value of other living space while basements typically do not.

In smaller areas where traditional skylights may not fit or just aren't necessary, more passive natural light can be easily added with VELUX SUN TUNNEL skylights. They feature rigid or flexible tunnels that bend around attic obstructions and are simple for homeowners to install.

They work particularly well in smaller or confined areas including entries, hallways, inner bathrooms, pantries and closets.

For free information on the benefits of natural light and skylight selection, or for free house

plans incorporating skylights, call 1-800-283-2831 or visit veluxusa.com. For government information on window and skylight energy efficiency visit energystar.gov, and for independent agency information visit nrc.org or efficientwindows.org.

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