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Looking Up

By: Starr Miller



When is the last time you looked up? Not at a cloud, not at a person approaching, but at the chandeliers in your home? Remember when you moved in and you thought, "It's not my favorite, but it will do for now." Then you never looked up again and now you don't even notice your ceilings.

Well it's time. Lighting has changed so dramatically over the past 10 years that you are missing out on adding something special to your home if you don't start investigating. Since we updated our chandeliers, my husband now suggests having dinner in the dining room!

Where to hang a chandelier depends on a variety of factors, such as where you might like to emphasize a high ceiling, bring a bit of whimsical light jewelry to a space, or emphasize a table or seating area. Chandeliers today are artful, fanciful, and just plain beautiful! They can be placed in a master bath, closet, kitchen, breakfast nook, wine cellar, entryway, dining room, or family room.

Most chandeliers act more as decoration than light, so make sure that you have other layers of light in

the room. A dimmer on any overhead lighting is a must.

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When placing a chandelier there are some basic principles, but you may vary from these rules when you have a specific design reason. An interior designer is trained to know how to work with scale and balance to mix these up for an overall design plan. If you have a good eye and know what you like, this guide should help!

ANCHORED OVER A TABLE

- When choosing a chandelier, the typical rule of thumb is the diameter should be one third the size of the table diameter. Most lighting designers suggest the table be at least one foot wider than the chandelier on all sides.

- The light over a dining table should be placed with the bottom at 30 inches above the table and adjust from there.

NOT ANCHORED OVER A TABLE

- If you choose to float a chandelier in a room, the rule is two inches diameter for every foot the room is wide. A 20-foot-wide room needs a 40-inch-wide chandelier.

- If your ceiling is 9 feet or taller, consider a two-tiered light to help fill the space more appropriately.

- A chandelier should be at least 6-1/2 to 7 feet from the floor when not anchored by an object below. This allows unobstructed movement.

When shopping for new lighting, remember that lighting stores can only carry best sellers. These are the items that will meet the needs and tastes of the masses. If you search online for lighting you will discover the full lines offered from many vendors. All month I will be highlighting some of my favorite chandeliers on my blog www.starrmiller.com/blog.



Starr Miller Interior Design, Inc. has been featured on HGTV's show "Save My Bath." She can be reached at 704.896.3321, and through her blog at starrmiller.com.