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Get the Light Right

Daylight is the lifeblood of a Good Small Space. Start the process of getting the light right by better understanding the nature of the light-emitting gas ball that we call the sun. Like Robert Mitchum in *The Night of the Hunter*, the sun can be your friend or your enemy, depending on its mood and ability to gain access to your home.¹ Don't take it for granted. As a general rule, you want to let lots of diffuse light in and keep direct rays out.²

Landscaping can also help you control solar gain. Deciduous trees block direct rays during hot months but let light through in winter, when overheating isn't as much of an issue.

Once you have introduced mass quantities of diffuse, life-affirming, niche-illuminating, basil-growing daylight into your Good Small Space, you need to figure out how your artificial lighting scheme will complement it at night. Consider lower-level indirect lighting to define key walls and ceilings in your home, with task lighting to brighten up areas that require a bit more punch. Ideally, all light sources should be dimmable, to save energy and to allow you to match the light level to your mood. **ll**

1. Or Mel Gibson, in any number of roles. Or just Mel Gibson in general.

2. An architect or interior designer can help you figure out how to use window treatments to control daylight while maintaining views and privacy. Bottom-up roller or pleated shades are a clever way to do just that.