

On my block, people seem to keep putting up bigger and bigger Christmas decorations all the time. Holiday decorations are anything but subtle here in the suburbs. Christmas lighting will sometimes take up the whole yard. My neighbor Jim, for example, has a lighted inflatable snowman, a glowing reindeer carousel, and dozens of other displays as well. This year, I thought that I'd buck the trend. I wanted to go for a touch of class, using an understated Christmas display. That is why I decided to go to the local store and pickup some miniature Christmas lights.

Of course, I have been using miniature Christmas tree lights for years. I like to create a multi-tiered effect by using lights of different sizes and colors. I have a small strand of white light bulbs at the back, a smaller Christmas light strand halfway down the branches, and some miniature Christmas lights at the tips of the limbs. It takes a while to set up, but the effect is gorgeous. I have always had one of the best Christmas trees in the neighborhood, even when you don't factor in my impressive collection of Christmas ornaments.

Putting up the miniature Christmas lights on the outside of my house, however, seemed like a much bigger challenge. It wasn't that it is hard to put up Christmas led lights on the roof - they are no harder to put up than any other strand of lights. The real challenge was doing the light display to create the maximum effect. I really wanted to create a look that would be noticed. I wanted my fare share of holiday attention!

The key to a good miniature Christmas light display - as I found out after spending a few hours tinkering with different configurations - is to go for something understated. A lot of people decide to buy tons of miniature Christmas lights, believing that the cumulative effect will be more impressive than using fewer strands of normal lights. In my opinion, if you are going for sheer volume and impressiveness, just use the normal lights! With miniature Christmas lights, subtlety is the key. Trace the outline of your house, make a few simple designs, or write happy holidays on the fence. The display will be less over the top, which makes it more magical somehow. Everyone can do bigger and brighter. It takes a man of taste to do a more sophisticated Christmas display.