

Kitchen Herb Light Setup & Observation Sheet

Companion sheet for: Indoor Herb Grow Lights: How to Fix Leggy Kitchen Herbs in Winter

YOUR KITCHEN HERB LIGHT CHECK - BASELINE & STATION SETUP

Use this page to check drainage, window sun, temperature, and your initial LED light height and timer schedule.

Part 1 - Pots, Drainage, and Kitchen Microclimate

- ☐ Pots have working drainage holes and saucers (excess water is emptied after watering).
- ☐ Potting mix drains freely and is checked in the top inch before watering (not watered on a rigid calendar).
- ☐ Two or more low-light signs confirmed (wide internode gaps, stems leaning to window, pale/floppy new growth).
- ☐ Cold drafts and heater blasts checked (pots kept off freezing window glass and out of hot furnace vents).
- ☐ Plants inspected for root rot or pests before assuming light is the sole problem.

Herbs grown in this station (e.g., basil, flat-leaf parsley, chives):

Window direction (S / W / E / N) & unobstructed direct sun hours in winter:

Nearby temperature notes (cold window glass at night, radiator/vent, drafty door):

Part 2 - Supplemental LED Grow Light & Timer Setup (Iowa State / UMN Extension Starting Range)

- ☐ White / full-spectrum LED fixture mounted directly above the herbs (not shining only from the side).
- ☐ Starting leaf-to-light distance set (~6-12 in / 15-30 cm starting point; follow fixture manual & heat clearance).
- ☐ Daily outlet timer set for 12-16 hours ON and an uninterrupted 8-12 hour dark period every night.
- ☐ Overly stretched soft tips pinched lightly above a leaf node (only on healthy plants) to mark new growth.

Fixture type & wattage / spectrum (e.g., 1-ft 5000K white LED bar under shelf):

Starting leaf-to-light distance (inches / cm above tallest herb tips):

Daily timer schedule (Time ON: _____ Time OFF: _____ Total hours ON: _____):

WEEKLY OBSERVATION LOG (2 TO 4 WEEKS)

Track new growth at the top tips over 2 to 4 weeks; old stretched stems will not shrink. Judge success by tighter spacing between new leaf pairs, sturdier upright stems, and healthy green leaf color without scorching or curling.

Week / Date	Light height (inches)	Timer hours/day	Soil moisture check	New top growth notes (internodes, leaf color, leaning)	Adjustment made
Entry 1:					
Entry 2:					
Entry 3:					
Entry 4:					
Entry 5:					
Entry 6:					

2 TO 4 WEEK CHECK-IN - WHAT YOUR NEW GROWTH SHOWS

- ☐ New growth is more compact (shorter gaps between new leaf pairs and firmer stems at the top tips).
- ☐ Leaves are normal green without bleaching/curling (light is neither too dim nor positioned too close/warm).
- ☐ Watering adjusted to actual soil drying (checking the top inch of potting mix rather than a fixed calendar).

University Extension References & Fixture Safety Note:

Iowa State University Extension: Growing Herbs Indoors (<https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/growing-herbs-indoors>)
Iowa State University Extension: Supplemental Lights (<https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/growing-indoor-plants-under-supplemental-lights>)
University of Minnesota Extension: Lighting for indoor plants (<https://extension.umn.edu/planting-and-growing-guides/lighting-indoor-plants>)
University of Minnesota Extension: Growing herbs indoors (<https://extension.umn.edu/herbs/growing-herbs-indoors>)
Note: 6-12 inches and 12-16 hours/day are general Extension starting ranges. Always follow your fixture manufacturer instructions.