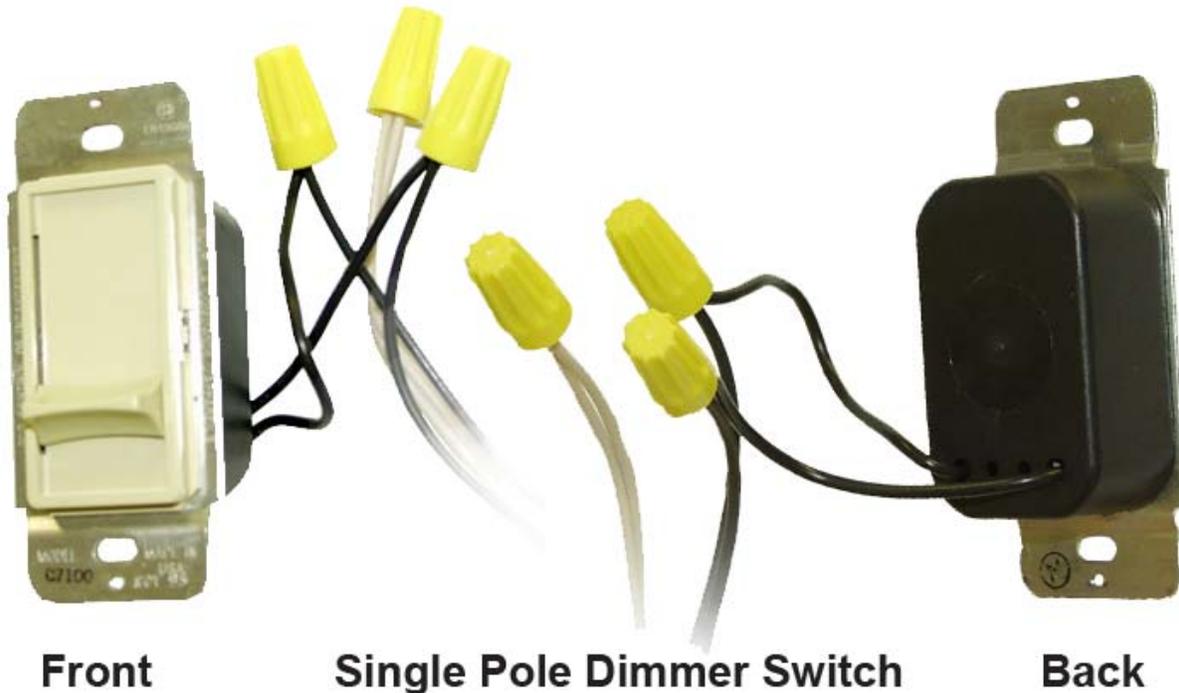


Installing a Dimmer Switch

Level of Difficulty – 3

Changing a standard light switch to a dimmer switch is a great project for any home owner, even if you've never done any level of electrical work before.

The illustration below shows a single pole dimmer switch. This switch will work if only one switch controls the light in the room. Often, if a room has more than one entry, there are two or more switches that control the light. For this arrangement, you'll need a dimmer switch that can be wired as a 3-way or even 4-way. Today, many dimmer switches can be wired for single pole or 3-way. You'll need to take a careful look at the wiring diagram that comes with the switch, so that you attach the wires to fit your light's switching needs.



The following instructions apply to most single-pole and 3-way light switches.

Note: If your new switch looks different from the switches shown above, visit K2W's article "Electrical Basics: A Beginner's Reference" for additional connection types.

1. Turn off the power to the switch. Remove the cover plate and use a circuit tester to verify that the wiring is not supplying power to the switch.
2. Remove the old switch by cutting the wires as near to the old switch terminals as possible.
3. Strip the ends of the wire to about ½" and per the wiring diagram connect the wires, using wire nuts. Twist together clockwise, until the wire nut is firmly attached to both wires.
4. If you have a ground wire that was attached to the old light switch, you can attach it to the electrical box by forming a loop in the wire and sandwiching it between the switch and the electrical box.
5. Carefully push all wiring back into the back of the electrical box, taking care not to damage the wiring insulation. Mount the switch to the wall box and inspect your work for any exposed wiring.
6. Install the face plate and turn on the power.