

Decorating Your Tree

(Keep in mind, fuller trees are most popular.)

When decorating your Christmas tree, follow these steps:

1. Put lights on first,
2. then garlands,
3. then the ornaments.

Step 1: Hang Christmas Tree Lights

Illuminating your Christmas tree from the inside out to give it the most dynamic look. Start at the base of the trunk and work your way up, wrapping lights around every major branch, moving from the trunk to the tip and back.

Don't skimp on lights -- for every vertical foot of tree, you should use a strand of 100 lights. **Work From the Inside Out:** Start arranging Christmas tree lights on the branches near the base of the tree. Weave strings of lights along the branches "inside," then move to the outer edges of the branches.

Step 2: Add Christmas Tree Garlands

To avoid the "sausage effect" (branches bulging between tightly cinched garlands), start at the top of the tree and slowly increase the amount of garland between each wave as you work your way down the branches. Plan to use about two strands of garland for every vertical foot of tree. To avoid a busy look on your tree, use a variety of garlands from plain to fancy. Thin, beaded garlands look best hung from branch to branch; thicker paper, ribbon, or foil garlands look best wrapped loosely around the entire tree.

Step 3: Hang Christmas Tree Ornaments

To showcase your favorite ornaments, place them in prime positions on the tree first. Next, hang your larger ornaments, spacing them evenly around the tree. Fill in around those ornaments with medium- and small-size ornaments. Be sure to hang some ornaments closer to the trunk to create depth and interest. Finish dressing the tree by adding specialty items, such as clip-on ornaments or icicles.

Don't hang all your ornament on the tips of the branches. Place ornaments and other decorations 'inside' your tree to add depth and interest. Start by arranging the "filler ornaments" evenly spaced around the tree. This would include basic solid color balls in a wide range of colors to coordinate and enhance your decorating scheme. You'll need about 20 "filler ornaments" for every 2 feet of Christmas tree.

Check the Special Olympics Wyoming website for pictures of unique trees that show a variety of options.