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LIGHTING 101



BY LINDA MAZUR

Light is an important part of any good design. Good lighting can enhance any room...but great lighting can make it shine!

For your lighting plan to be successful in your living space you really should consider a layered approach to your lighting. Layering your lighting is advantageous as it enables you flexibility to create many different atmospheres and functions within a given space. There are four different categories of lighting layers you should be aware of: Ambient, Task, Accent and Decorative.

Ambient lighting will illuminate a space and allow you easy mobility throughout a room. Task lighting, as the name states, affords you added lighting in a specific area devoted to a particular undertaking such as reading, working at a kitchen counter etc. Accent lighting can be used to highlight artwork, décor or perhaps architectural features within a space. And, finally there's decorative lighting, the fourth layer of illumination, which simply is an accessory to your room, or the "finishing touch".

However, one source of light that should never be forgotten in design is natural light ... what I like to consider to be a fifth layer of lighting. Natural light is the most inexpensive and environmentally friendly light available. Many new condo and home builds are being constructed today with wonderfully large window features that allow for maximum natural light, even in smaller spaces. Not only can this feature provide you with great natural lighting and a wonderful view, it also can create the illusion of a larger more grandiose space.

A great example of a functional lighting design can be seen in this recent kitchen project. The recessed pot lights provide ambient lighting, under cabinet lighting and island pendants provide us with task lighting, decorative lighting can be found in the glass cabinetry which adds a special touch to the room in the evenings. Finally, the beautiful, large picture window allows for an array of natural lighting to flood the room.

Here are a few design tips to get you started:

- Work with a reputable lighting store when purchasing your lighting; they can provide you with technical assistance from certified lighting specialists that will assist you with your needs.
- Incorporate a different style of light into your space, something a bit modern in a more traditional environment, or a beautiful crystal chandelier paired with a rustic farmhouse table.
- The general rule for an 8-foot ceiling height is that a chandelier should be hung approximately 29 to 33 inches above a dining table; for each added foot of ceiling height increase by three inches.
- Recessed pot lights are a lovely addition to a room. However, be sure to add the proper amount...too many can be overwhelming and appear messy on your ceiling. If you reside in a condo pot lights may be restricted. Consider the addition of track lighting in this case...there are many great track light systems on the market now that have a very high-end look to them and are far more user-friendly for a condo environment.
- Use dimmer switches where possible; not only can it reduce your electrical usage, but it also adds to the ambience of a room.
- When in doubt... best to hire a design professional!



Designer **LINDA MAZUR** is the Principal Designer of Linda Mazur Design Group. With over a decade of experience this sought out multi-disciplinary interior design firm is known for providing innovative interior renovations and full-scale build projects that reflect both timeless style and optimal functionality. The firm services Toronto, GTA and surrounding areas.
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