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First Impressions Decor

Lighting design tips

Lighting can make a big difference in how you feel about your home. It helps you perform tasks more easily, makes you feel safer and more comfortable, and allows you to enjoy your home to its full potential. Lighting adds beauty and drama to a room. It can create a stimulating atmosphere or a quiet feeling of relaxation.



Lighting should be planned to complement your lifestyle. First you need to develop a home lighting plan that suits your individual needs and those of your family. When planning your lighting, look at the activities that occur in each room, the atmosphere you want to create and the decorative elements you wish to emphasize. Keep in mind that light can be absorbed and even wasted in dark-coloured rooms, or reflected and used as additional illumination in light-coloured rooms. Also, take note of those areas serving more than a single purpose and those that will require more than one type of lighting.

There are three basic types of lighting that work together to light your home: *general*, *task* and *accent*. A good lighting plan combines all three types to light an area, according to function and style.

General lighting provides an area with overall illumination. Also known as ambient lighting, general lighting radiates a comfortable level of brightness, enabling one to see and walk about safely. It can be accomplished with chandeliers, ceiling or wall-mounted fixtures, recessed or track lights, and with lanterns outside your home. A basic form of lighting that replaces sunlight, general lighting is fundamental to a lighting plan.

Task lighting helps you perform specific tasks such as reading, sewing, cooking, homework, hobbies. It can be provided by recessed and track lighting,

pendant lighting, and portable lamps. Task lighting should be free of distracting glare and shadows and should be bright enough to prevent eyestrain.

Accent lighting adds drama to a room by creating visual interest. As part of a decorating scheme, it is used to spotlight paintings, houseplants, sculpture, and other prized possessions, or to highlight the texture of a wall, drapery or outdoor landscaping. Accent lighting requires at least three times as much light on the focal point as the general lighting around it. This usually is provided by track, recessed, or wall-mounted fixtures.



Appropriate family room lighting

When designing a lighting plan for a living room or family room, you need to consider the variety of activities that occur there. You'll want to include general lighting for entertaining and watching television, task lighting for reading and accent lighting for artwork, plants, and interesting architectural features. Dimming controls are ideal for the living room because they allow you to design the lighting to suit each mood and activity



Incorporating three types of lighting in the family or living room allows for a variety of activities to occur comfortably.

Fireplaces can be emphasized with recessed downlights installed in the ceiling over the mantle to create an intriguing grazing effect across the surface. Wall sconces on each side of the fireplace are an attractive addition that draws attention to the fireplace area, while providing general lighting for the living room.

Reading requires task lighting that comes from behind the

reader's shoulder. This can be accomplished by placing a floor lamp either at the right or the left of the reading chair. The bottom of the shade should be located at eye level to avoid glare.

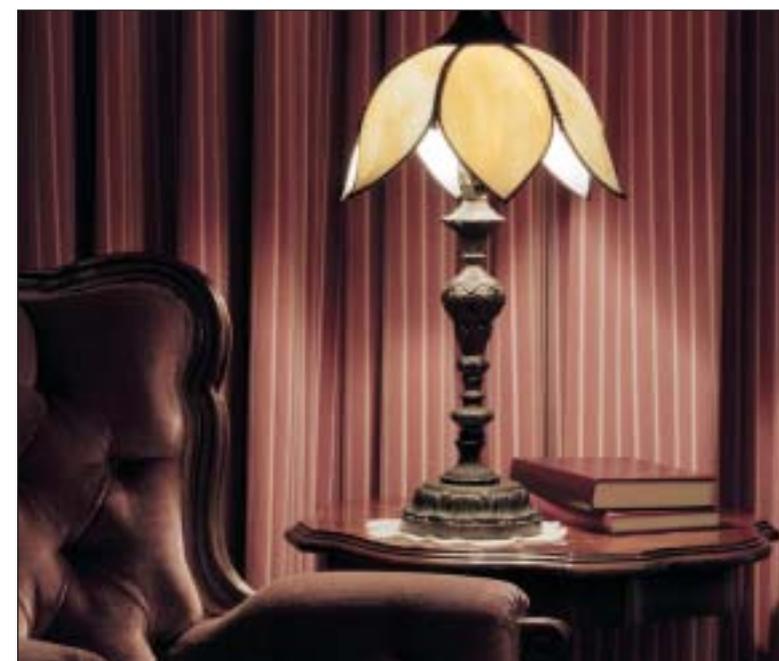
Art work can be highlighted

with low-voltage, tungsten-halogen picture lights. These frame-mounted lights spread a beam of bright, white light across the face of the painting.

House plants can be accented by aiming an upright can at the wall behind the plant, creating a dramatic silhouette of the plant against the wall.

TV, video games, and computers require low-level general lighting that does not wash out the screen's image nor reflect into the viewer's eyes. Miniature track lighting can be installed under shelves to provide both general and accent lighting. Choose from accent spots, mini-lights, and compact or linear fluorescent light sources. Bars can be lighted from above with recessed or track fixtures, or with miniature, low-voltage pendants that hover intimately over the bar.

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Reading requires task lighting that comes from behind the reader's shoulder. This table lamp is appropriately placed.