

LIGHT IT UP!

The Ultimate Design Element for Your Home

[BY KARIN BOHNE • PHOTO BY AMANDA OSTER OF PROVOKE STUDIOS]

LIGHTING IS AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT component to consider when designing a room or a space, yet despite its critical role, appropriate lighting is a design element that is often overlooked. Lighting a room properly can be the essential component that either makes or breaks the look you are trying to achieve. So much so, in fact, that the wrong type of light can make a bold colour palette seem drab and boring, while fantastic lighting can elevate a space from average to beautiful. When it comes to updating your home, lighting might be the design element you've been looking for, and since it is often difficult to know exactly how to improve your space when it comes to illumination, this article will offer some helpful hints to help you to brighten up your life.

Lighting is a broad term, but in design it is typically categorized in three ways—general, task and ambient. All three sources should be thoughtfully considered to achieve a well-lit and tastefully designed space.

Most commonly used and often the only type considered, general lighting is intended to simply illuminate a room. Recessed fixtures in the ceiling that light an entire room or single fixtures above the dining room table are good examples of general lighting. A beautiful light fixture—like a chandelier—is an excellent way to implement design into general lighting, expressing a luxurious and expensive feel and enhancing the room's character.

When better lighting is required for more specific activities like cooking or reading, task lighting is often needed. In the kitchen, installing under-cabinet lights to highlight countertops and work surfaces or hanging pendant lights above the island are ideal solutions that also add style to a space. Lamps on a desk or bedside table are also great

> INCANDESCENT BULBS GIVE OFF AN EXTREMELY WARM GLOW THAT NO OTHER LIGHT BULB CAN MIMIC.



examples of task lighting. With an

extensive array of colours and styles to choose from, lamps like this provide extra lighting when necessary, but can also add to the décor of the room. Lampshades can be easily switched as well to provide a simple and affordable means of changing up your décor.



➤ **WITH SO MANY BEAUTIFUL AND INTERESTING DESIGNS ON THE MARKET TODAY, LIGHTING CAN BE THE ULTIMATE DECORATIVE PIECE FOR YOUR HOME.**

Ambient lighting is the type of lighting that best sets the “mood” in a space. Background light that does not serve to illuminate an entire space or provide light for a specific task can be considered ambient lighting—such as soft lights that create warmth in a room to make it comfortable and inviting, or dim lights that suggest a relaxing atmosphere. A floor lamp where the light source is close to the floor is an example of a fixture that might provide ambient lighting since it shines upward and creates a soft glow. Instead of purchasing a new light fixture to create ambience, adding dimmer switches to already existing

fixtures is one of the best and most affordable ways to create ambience in a home. Romantic candlelight or the cozy light from a fire can also be important sources of ambient lighting.

With so many types of lighting on the market, it can be tough to choose the appropriate light for your space, so here are some guidelines that you can follow:

Incandescent bulbs give off an extremely warm glow that no other light bulb can mimic. With such soft colouring, incandescent lighting is perfect for creating a cozy and comfortable atmosphere. The downside to incandescent lighting, however, is that it does not help your hydro bill! Due to the substantial energy that is lost to heat, incandescent lighting is not very energy efficient.

Fluorescent lighting, on the other hand, is an extremely efficient type of light and is an ideal option for general lighting in a home, office or retail space where mood lighting is not essential. While it is possible to obtain fluorescent lights in various hues, it is typically a very “white” light and is not usually the best

choice in spaces where ambience may be important—like above your dining room table or in your bedside lamps.

LED lights are also an efficient and long-lasting option that have become all the rage in recent years. Where a typical incandescent bulb may only last some 1,200 hours (50 days), an LED fixture can last up to 50,000 hours (2,083 days). LED lights are also available in a variety of colours, ranging from white to bold reds, blues, greens and every other colour under the sun.

With so many beautiful and interesting designs on the market today, lighting can be the ultimate decorative piece for your home. Think about layering the different types of lighting—general, task, and ambient—and always opt for more light rather than less. As a general rule and for optimal light levels, light each square foot of space with about two to four watts of light. Incorporate a number of fixtures within the same space, and maybe try using an artistic or sculptural piece that will add personality and flair to the room. Have fun with your lighting, and as they say—light it up! ■