

DESIGN FOR SUCCESS

# THE RIGHT LIGHT

**I**T'S MORE THAN AN OVERHEAD LIGHT FIXTURE. Or a table lamp next to your favorite chair. The right light can make – or break – any room's décor. All design professionals know that the secret that takes a room from drab to dramatic can simply be the right lighting.

First, the basics: A well-lit room includes four major types of

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lighting – ambient, task, accent and mood – all of which create a dramatic effect in your room.

## AMBIENT OR GENERAL LIGHTING

This type of lighting is indirect, and literally bounces off the walls and ceiling to provide comfortable background illumination. It is important that it be distributed evenly in your rooms, so that no areas are overly bright or hidden in the shadows. Recessed and track lighting are considered two of the best general sources of light. A chandelier is also a source of gen-

eral light in a dining room, and a frequently asked question is “Where should it hang?” The rule of thumb is 30 inches above the table to cast plenty of illumination without blocking the view of your guests.

## TASK LIGHTING

This is exactly as its name infers – it provides necessary light for specific duties such as reading, writing or cooking. Again, it's important that task lighting be shadow-free. Because of its “localized” nature, two great examples are reading lamps and under-counter lighting. Table lamps are fun accessories that add personality to your decor while being functional as a task light source. The size of the lamp is key, and often people choose a lamp that is too short to cast light where it is needed, or so tall that the bulb creates a glare.

## ACCENT LIGHTING

Accent lighting is purely decorative, and includes everything from up-lights to sconces and spotlights. If you wish to accent a work of art, or draw attention to an architectural element in your home, then accent lighting would be your best choice. A



beautiful torchiere can add life to a dark corner and add the drama that the room lacked.

### MOOD LIGHTING

This type of lighting generally comes from flexible light sources. For example, if you want to change the mood in your dining room, simply add a dimmer switch to your chandelier, and you've instantly changed your room's ambiance. And of course, candlelight is the ultimate mood lighting.

### COLOR EFFECTS

Natural and artificial light play a very important role in the overall color scheme of your room. As you begin the process to select the perfect color for your walls, floors and fabrics, consider how much natural light enters the room and for how long a period during the day.

In sunny rooms with a southern exposure, cool wall colors will be more pleasing than warm ones; hot yellows and reds will produce an unpleasant glare during a large part of the day. These colors are more effectively used in rooms that face north and need the warming effect of sunny colors. The window treatment you use will also affect the amount and quality of

natural light in your room, and therefore your color scheme.

Artificial light can affect colors even more dramatically. Generally, standard incandescent bulbs give off a yellowish light, which can turn blue walls green and make cream walls appear to be bright yellow. Standard fluorescent bulbs create a cold,

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harsh light and are not the most flattering on skin tones. Throwing a light of one color on a wall of the same color will always tend to neutralize that color and ultimately make the wall look dull and grey. Definitely not a pretty picture!

However, many different tints of bulbs are available in both types of lights. Using the right tint in the bulbs you select will definitely help you control the way your colors look in artificial light. So, once you select your color scheme, be sure to carry through with a lighting plan that will enhance and compliment the effect you have in mind. The right light will make or break your décor!!

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*inside the beltline off of Capital Blvd • 919-755-0185 • www.hopperpiano.com*