


NEW HOMES & CONDOS


Larger pendant lights were used in this kitchen to match the scale of the design. Photo by John Heineman.

Let there be light



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CONFIDENTIAL**

These days, lighting for the home is a complicated topic. Once it was simply a matter of having enough table lamps spread throughout a space to make sure there was at least overall light.

Remember the 1970s with cords everywhere for lamps and swaged fixtures over tables just to get the light where we needed it? (Need I even mention these were probably macramé or tiffany glass?)

Today, this has all changed. Now, with technology and affordable price points, there is a plethora of new lighting styles and systems one can select that doesn't just provide the basics but also atmosphere as well.

What's up with pot lights? Look up at a ceiling in any new home in the GTA and you will notice that general lighting is mostly handled by recessed pot lights spread throughout a room.

These are smaller and less visible than the original ones that were used in the 1970s and 80s that had black interiors and huge flood-like bulbs.

Today they are roughly 3" to 4" in diameter and mounted flush with the ceiling to create a smooth, clean look.

The danger with pot lighting is, frankly, adding too many. What I mean by this is that having too many lights packed into a ceiling looks more like an airport and less like a warm home environment.

This can happen when a contractor or homeowner opts to add lights everywhere in a ceiling too close together. Instead, target lights where they are really needed for general brightness with additional lighting provided through other sources like task and ambient. (More about this in a minute.)

For good pot light design, think about a general grid pattern but one that doesn't take over the ceiling. Spread lights out 36" to 48" apart and think about highlighting certain areas by grouping pots specifically.

For instance, add a pair over a fireplace mantle or artwork. Too many pot lights looks busy and draws too much

attention to the ceiling.

The goal of lighting is to highlight what's below it and not the source!

LED technology

Many clients ask me regularly about LED (light emitting diodes) as manufacturers create new ways to get better brightness with less energy use.

Originally considered "too blue" in colour temperature for residential use, that's changed as the temperature of LEDs now match the warmth of a regular filament bulb but require less maintenance meaning they are replaced infrequently.

They are available as pot lights or for table lamps but they also work under cabinets or as hidden lighting due to their slim nature and low heat emission.

Specific tasks

Task lighting is an important addition to any space where you are performing work that needs specific lighting such as on a kitchen counter top.

LED lighting has come to replace fluorescent tubes as it can be installed in smaller openings such as inside drawers or closets.

And it's all dimmable! Unlike fluorescent tubes, LEDs are fully dimmable but be sure to invest in a high quality dimmer to ensure it can read the lower energy transfer of LEDs or the dimmer may not work.

And for those of you like me,

who seem to struggle with having enough light in key areas like closets, bathrooms and mudrooms where specific and sometimes delicate tasks are being performed (I'm thinking about applying make up), add more lighting sources, not less.

Remember, each group of lights can be switched separately so you only need to operate what lights you require at that time.

Create atmosphere

The final lighting category to add to any space is ambient or atmosphere lighting. Of course by adding dimmers to your pot lights, you create this already!

This is an important part of making a space look rich, soft and feel warm so include pendant lights, sconces or chandeliers to add style as well.

As we move into the summer season with more natural daylight, we forget how important lighting is until we don't have enough!

A lighting overhaul maybe necessary and this is an excellent investment in your home as unlike any other reno you do, if you can't see it, there isn't much point in doing it! Good lighting is the key!

— Author, television personality and celebrity designer Jane Lockhart appears as a regular guest on *The Marilyn Denis Show*. For more information, visit www.janelockhart.com.



In this home, Jane Lockhart Interior Design created a lighting design that complimented the layout of the counter. Photo by Brandon Barre.



A modern chandelier was added to ceiling pot lights to enhance the design and add lighting to this living room. Photo by Gillian Jackson.