

## Lighting for Living

Lighting is one of the most overlooked design elements, maintains award-winning lighting consultant **Doreen Le May Madden**, president of the New England Section of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America. **Madden** works with designers, architects, and clients to use light correctly, efficiently, and beautifully at Lux Lighting Design in Belmont.

"Without light there is no color, no mood, no drama, so one criteria for quality lighting design is knowing how light works and how people react to it. By integrating various lighting characteristics with the homeowner's needs, it's possible to combine beauty and function to create a most pleasing environment," Madden says. "Lighting that involves various directions, color, and intensity, a 'layering of light' effect, if you will, is what directs the eye."



Understanding the various qualities of light can help create an eye-catching room:

Diffuse lighting spreads light in all directions and is perceived as soft light. It's even more comforting if a warm color or incandescent light source is used. You can achieve this with table lamps, ceiling-mounted fixtures or chandeliers with frosted glass or bulbs. Dimmable fluorescent sources can convey the feeling of incandescent with warmer tones and with a high color rendering. A combination of fluorescent and low-voltage sources can provide an energy efficient lighting design that is also very comfortable to live within.

Direct, or accent, lighting is focused and brighter than the ambient light in a space and is often achieved with recessed or track lighting where a range of beam spreads, using low-voltage bulbs. It provides focus for the eye on items to which the homeowner may want to call attention (artwork, flowers, etc.). Using materials in a space that capture the light will provide another layer or movement; highlighting reflective materials or water, for instance, at just the right angle will offer a creative accent.

Angles of light create a more appealing space by providing more visual interest. Some recessed lighting has directional capabilities and can be supplemented

with lenses to help control light distribution, UV, and color. Some recessed lighting is designed to wash walls with light, others may create a “scalloping effect.” Using light as art itself is a beautiful effect that takes knowledge of angles, colors, and intensity.

Colored light is another way **Madden** uses to add a layer of light for a subtle or dramatic look with controls determining the effects.

Brightness, says **Madden**, is perceived differently by each person. Control systems (dimmers) can provide lighting levels to suit various users of a space. Depending on use, there should be sufficient light levels on and near work surfaces. Evaluating whether the tasks require small visual details (such as sewing) or a large, visual detail (where to go in a hallway) determines the proper light levels. Additionally, the placing of individual lighting fixtures is important—to eliminate direct glare from the fixture itself or from reflected glare from shiny surfaces.

Important items you should consider for good lighting **Madden** says, are: the appearance of the space and luminaries (fixtures, lamps); color; direct glare; light levels on room surfaces; light patterns or distribution on surfaces; flattery; comfort; flexibility; efficiency; and lighting control. All of these, plus understanding the user’s desires, likes, and dislikes, is what results in a lighting design that meets or exceeds expectations.

## **Picking Paint Colors Without Fear**

If you’re thinking about putting color into your life there’s no easier way to do it than with paint. Paint is inexpensive and easy to change. It empowers you to change your mood without changing your furnishings or allows you to change a room every so often. And, if you make a mistake, as can happen with a color that you love on a dress but can’t stand when you’re surrounded by four walls of it in