

# How to Design Your Recessed Lighting Layout

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Recessed lighting is very popular with residential and commercial interior designers because it's unique, beautiful, and exceptionally versatile. Recessed lights are ideal for focusing soft light on small areas or for lighting a whole room, and can be used for any design purpose — business utility, aesthetics, or ambiance. Of course, as with any type of lighting, room designs and lighting layouts are the keys to making the most of the functional and aesthetic benefits of recessed lights. Here are some great tips for creating your unique recessed lighting layout.

## Where Should I Put Recessed Lighting?

The number of pot lights you install and the way you space and pattern your array of recessed lights should depend on a combination of considerations:

- The size, shape, and configuration of the room, and the ceiling height
- The decorating style used in the room
- How the room is used and future purposes it may serve
- The way you want the lighting to serve your vision for the functionality or aesthetic of the room
- Whether recessed lighting is the only source of light for the room. Naturally, if you will also be using lamps and/or wall sconces, you may want fewer recessed lights.

## Decide What the Recessed Lights Will Be Used For

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The layout of your recessed lighting should be based primarily on your *purpose* for the lights. So, first, think about what you're going to use the lights for. Recessed lights are great for functional, decorative, or ambient use or combined purposes in one space.

Choose whether you want the lighting mostly for a utility or decorative purposes. This will help narrow down the options for areas of the room where it makes the most sense to place the lights to serve your purposes.

### Lighting for utility

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Functional lighting is also known as “task lighting.” It requires a layout for adding the best illumination to spaces in a room where people will *need* the most light while doing their work. The objective of your lighting layout should be to provide abundant illumination of areas where people will be working or walking.

### Lighting for aesthetics

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Choosing locations for recessed lights to serve primarily decorative uses can be more exciting, but it can be harder to pinpoint the ideal locations to suit your aesthetic preferences. Aesthetic choices are subjective matters of taste, and deciding what we *like best* in decorating is often more complicated than identifying what we *need most*. A good rule of thumb is to lay out your recessed lighting plan to accent the points you want to feature in the room. For example, you may choose to direct one or multiple accent lights near special art or craft pieces, or near unique furniture pieces.

### Lighting for ambiance

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Recessed lighting is a perfect choice for mood lighting in any space. Using a dimmer switch and ideal pot light placement helps transform even the most mundane space. Think about where you will position your furniture and decor, and especially your lamps or other installed lighting sources if you're combining lighting types. You can always incorporate recessed lights with dimmers as *fill* lighting.

## Define General Sections of the Room for Placement of Recessed Lighting

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To simplify the decision process, first, figure out which general area or areas of the room you want to illuminate with recessed lighting. Do you want to use soft light to accent peripheral areas for occasional use, or the area(s) most frequently used, or just highlight a few decorative features? There are no rules! Place your recessed lights for maximum functional advantage and/or to fit your aesthetic design. For a few examples:

### Where to place recessed lighting in the living room?

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In a great room, maybe you like the look of recessed lighting spread in a more random-looking pattern along one or more sides and/or from a corner outward toward the middle of the room.

### **Where to place recessed lighting in the bedroom?**

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In a bedroom, you may want to use recessed lighting above a cozy seating area in a corner of the room and/or near the bed.

### **Placement of recessed lights in kitchen**

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In a kitchen, you may want to add ambient lighting over a breakfast nook and above countertops.

**PRO DESIGN TIP:** Though recessed lighting looks gorgeous when used to accent peripheral areas of rooms, avoid placing pot lights too close to walls. When these lights are installed within about two feet of a wall, they can cast dark shadows down the wall. This effect can cause an unwanted, unappealing appearance, and it reduces the effectiveness of the lights to illuminate the area where they're placed.

### **Pinpoint Specific Spots Where You Want Each Recessed Light Installed**

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After you decide in which general sections of the room you want to add recessed lighting, think about how many pot lights you want to use in each of those sections. You may want to install more lights in some selected sections than others.

You can try a free recessed lighting placement calculator online to help you get a general idea of the typical numbers of pot lights used based on room dimensions. Just remember to factor the necessary two-foot recessed lighting distance from walls.

Then, consider how you want the pot lights to be finely *positioned* in each of the sections. First, determine how far apart the lights should be from each other to look and function as you have in mind. Then, identify the specific spot on the ceiling where each light should be placed to illuminate the spot on the floor that you want to illuminate.

Think about what will *be* on that floor spot you want to illuminate — a reading chair, a side table with a vase of fresh flowers, a sofa, bookshelves, a window seat, a cluster of houseplants, a collectible item, etc.? Or, maybe you simply want to stagger a few recessed lights along an open area for walking.

**PRO DESIGN TIP:** Visualize the room complete with the furnishings and decor you want and where you like to imagine the room having a bit of mood lighting or extra fill lighting for function. Start with this visualization to begin your process of laying out your recessed lighting plan.

## Clearly Mark the Spot for Each Pot Light Installation

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Recessed lighting is highly useful, cost-effective, and beautiful. However, after it is installed it can be difficult to remove, and patching the holes in the ceiling is an expense that is better avoided. So, it's important to prevent misunderstandings about installation locations for recessed light fixtures. Be sure to communicate your plan for locating pot lights precisely to your installer. It's recommended that you take one of these 3 approaches:

1. Create a schematic scaled to match the room dimensions. Have your installer examine and sign this written layout, to acknowledge that you both are literally on the same page. OR:
2. Mark the spots directly on the ceiling to indicate where you want the center of the light bulb inside each fixture. OR:
3. Do both A and B.

## Only Allow Licensed Electricians to Install Recessed Lighting

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When you're ready to install your recessed lighting, choose licensed, certified electricians to work with. Also, compare quality reviews and pricing before you go forward with your lighting project or any electrical work in your NJ home or business.

## Upgrade to Recessed Lighting With DK Electrical Solutions!

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We are a group of Master electricians in New Jersey. We bring unique, out-of-the-box approaches to electrical work that only the top electrical designers can offer. Our advanced skills and techniques make DK Master Electricians ideal for aesthetic electrical installations like recessed lighting arrays and other custom lighting strategies.

We offer financing for large electrical projects and 0% interest for qualified credit. See our great discount coupons page. All our pricing is upfront — zero surprises! We warranty all our work.

**If you need a certified electrician, call DK Electrical Solutions Inc., Southampton, NJ, at (609) 604-5490, or contact us online to schedule your free onsite quote.**

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