

# Upgrade Your Kitchen With New Lighting Options

Studies have shown that when it comes to spending time at home, no room gets more visitors than the kitchen.

Even with media rooms and family rooms offering more than

ever before, the kitchen remains a gathering spot.

In spite of their universal popularity, many kitchens remain in need of a few adjustments. Many times, homeowners mistake the

need for tinkering with the need for a complete remodeling, a job that typically costs thousands of dollars.

But seeing your kitchen in a new light doesn't need to break the bank. In fact, a few relatively inexpensive lighting changes can be all a kitchen needs.

## Track Lighting

The primary benefit of track lighting is the ability to direct light anywhere you need it. Rather than a single fixture, track lighting has multiple fixtures, helping to serve a multitude of purposes.

Specialized fixtures can be used for mood lighting or task lighting. When combined with a typical kitchen fixture, track lighting can allow homeowners to light their kitchens in a variety of ways. For instance, during the busiest hours, the traditional fixture can help keep the room well lit.

Overnight, however, dim track lighting can be used to provide lighting for midnight snacks or if you need to keep a light on for someone arriving home late.

Another benefit of track lighting is the role it plays in cleaning. Hard to reach spots in cabinets are

often hard to see as well, making it difficult to know if you've done a thorough job cleaning. With track lighting, direct the light into the cabinets and your cleaning will prove a lot easier.

## Recessed Lighting

Recessed lighting is usually an inexpensive option and one that sheds light on places that otherwise might not be well lit, such as cabinets and walls. However, many people decorate the walls of their kitchens or replace their old cabinets, and would like to have some light aimed at these spots.

If your kitchen features artwork on the walls or new cabinets, consider recessed lighting to highlight these additions.

Also, just like track lighting, if directed toward cabinets recessed lighting can pay dividends when it comes time to clean, shedding light on cabinets that would otherwise be dark.

## Under Cabinet Lighting

Under cabinet lighting can be a great addition to any kitchen with lots of countertop space.

In many kitchens, cabinets block light from countertops, making it difficult to prepare meals or, if you

have an eat-in kitchen, sit and read a newspaper or book while enjoying a meal. Installing lights under the cabinets will solve this problem. Fluorescent lights, though they burn cooler than halogen lights, can create an uncomfortable reflection off of countertops.

Halogen lights, though they won't last as long as fluorescent light, create a white light that's easier to work by.

Regardless which under cabinet lighting you install, try and put it at the front of the cabinet. This will ensure more light makes it onto the countertop than the wall. Also, install undercabinet lighting uniformly under all cabinets.

That way, when it comes time to make big meals such as Thanksgiving dinner when you'll be using all countertops at once, they will be lit evenly.

## Make Lighting Flexible

Because many people spend so much time in the kitchen for different reasons, make your lighting as flexible as possible.

The best way to do this is with a dimmer switch. A dimmer will enable you to set the mood for whatever you're doing in the kitchen.

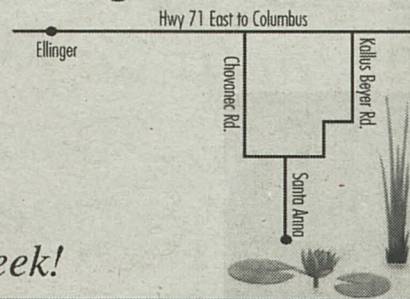
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