

## Lighting Can Make or Break Your Office Productivity:

Prevent Eyestrain, Headaches & Poor Efficiency

**By Linda Varone**

Linda@thesmarterhomeoffice.com

### The Wrong Lighting Can Sabotage Your Comfort and Work Performance

- 79% of computer workers want better lighting.
- Eyestrain is perceived as the #1 health hazard.
- Improper lighting results in a 10 minute a day loss of productivity due to eye focusing problems - that's over 3 hours a month.

### Poor Lighting > Eye Strain > Decreased Productivity

A simple change in lighting can be one of the most powerful, and cost-effective, improvements you make in your office.

- If you think just any kind of light in your office is OK, read on.
- If you know your current lighting is not working, but don't know what to do, here are the solutions to your problem.

A client was troubled by severe migraines triggered by fluorescent lighting. We turned off the overhead fluorescent panels and placed a table lamp with an incandescent (Edison) bulb on her desk and another on the file credenza behind her. "My migraines disappeared!" she exclaimed later.



Photo: toastyken

**Ceiling mounted fixtures (fluorescent and incandescent) are the enemy of comfort and productivity.** Fluorescents create gray flat light that causes eye fatigue and headaches. A surface-mounted ceiling fixture with one or two 60 watt bulbs or a recessed ceiling fixture is inadequate and casts shadows

on your work surface. This brief article will show you the best and simplest way to add lighting to your workspace to make it more efficient and comfortable.

### Make the most of natural light



Photo: iStock

**Natural light is the best light.** You can access natural light with a window, a skylight or a solar tube. If possible, position your desk *perpendicular* to the window. This allows natural light to illuminate your work surface and avoids eyestrain from extreme light contrast and looking into sun glare.

If you have sun for only part of the day, need to close your shades against too-bright sunlight, have dreary overcast days, or work before sunrise or after sunset, you need supplemental artificial light.

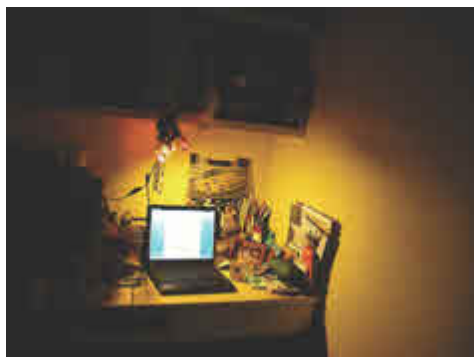
### The Smart Use of Artificial Light

Assess the artificial light in your home office. Do you have a lamp on your desk or near your reading chair? It is best to position lamps to illuminate your work rather than a corner of the room.

### Why desk lamps are NOT the best lamps

Desk lamps, by design, create a circle of very bright light with darkness beyond that. This contrast between extreme light and dark causes eye strain. When your eyes get tired, *you* get tired.

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**Borrow a lighting idea from the executive suite:** use table lamps on your desk. The taller the lamp, the larger the circle of light you will have on your work surface. A good rule of thumb is to have the bottom of the lamp shade a bit higher than the top of your monitor or computer screen. Translucent lamp shades, in white or off-white, allow the most light to spread in a larger circle while softly diffusing the light. This diffused light is easier on the eyes and makes the room - and you - more attractive.



Photo: tvol

You will work best if there are two sources of light in an office: two lamps, a lamp and natural light or overhead light and a table lamp.

## Not All Compact Fluorescents are Created Equal.



**Not All Compact Fluorescents are Created Equal** Fluorescents are a fact of life, but you may dislike the cold institutional quality of compact fluorescent light (CFLs). In the last few years manufacturers have made available CFLs that have a warmer more incandescent quality so then look for labels that say “warm white” or “soft white.” Avoid CFLs that are labeled “cool white “ or bright white.”

Full Spectrum Light is a cooler, bluer form of light, not a cure-all solution. It is best used as task lighting for extended reading or fine craft work. Note: People with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) or the “Winter Blues” need a dedicated full-spectrum light box. A full spectrum light bulb in a lamp will not help.





Learn more about lighting and how to set up a more productive and comfortable home office with my book, *The Smarter Home Office*, (\$12.50) is available on [Amazon](#)

***The Smarter Home Office: 8 Simple Steps to Increase Income, Inspiration and Comfort*** shows you how to set up your office or workspace for improved comfort and productivity based on the insights of architectural psychology (the overlooked human factor in design).

Learn:

- how to adjust your monitor, keyboard and chair to prevent aches and muscle pain,
- how to mask distracting background noise,
- how contact with nature de-stresses you, and
- what colors support mental focus and what colors support creativity and activity.

*“Great book, great Ideas! Short and to the point.”*

If you liked what you read here, you can [check out recent The Smarter Home Office blog posts.](#)

For a personal office consultation contact Linda at 781-643-8697 or [Linda@thesmarterhomeoffice.com](mailto:Linda@thesmarterhomeoffice.com)  
To get a 10% discount mention code *SHOLPDF1*



Photo: Lynn McCann

Linda Varone is an award-winning home and office design consultant. She has helped clients add warmth, energy and comfort to their spaces using a unique blend of architectural psychology (the overlooked human aspect of design) and interior design. As a professional speaker Linda entertains and informs corporate and organization audiences. She is the author of *The Smarter Home Office: 8 simple steps to increase your income, inspiration and comfort.*

If you learned something new, please share this with 3 friends.

Linda can be reached at 781-643-8697 or [Linda@TheSmarterHomeOffice.com](mailto:Linda@TheSmarterHomeOffice.com)  
[TheSmarterHomeOffice.com](http://TheSmarterHomeOffice.com)