



**a definite do**  
 Mix classic candlelight with hi-tech attention-grabbers.

*The Knot*  
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# lighting dos and don'ts

Let these simple rules guide your way to a perfectly lit reception. BY LISA FREEDMAN

No matter how many sit-ups and downward-facing dogs you do, you may never love the swimwear fitting room—and that's because those annoying overhead lights aren't exactly flattering. Think of your wedding the same way. When lighting is done well, it can make everything—your flowers, cake and guests—look better. Read on as lighting design guru Bentley Meeker ([BentleyMeeker.com](http://BentleyMeeker.com)), who's done weddings for Catherine Zeta-Jones and Chelsea Clinton, shares his top tips. >>





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LIGHTING DOS AND DON'TS CONT.

**DO** make sure the lights can be dimmed

Leaving on the venue's lights will make the space too bright, but people may think they're broken if you simply turn them off. What's the rule for dimming? "Make the room 10 percent darker than you think it should be. Let your eyes adjust for five minutes, and if you can see your shoes, that's the perfect level." Also, be aware of any service doors, which when kept open, can flood the space with light.

**tip** it's a wash

"My favorite lighting technique for personalizing a ballroom or any venue space is a full-room color wash with additional patterned light in an accent color," says Gina Jokilehto-Schigel of Shi Shi Events in Cleveland.

**DON'T** have your heart set on LEDs

"LED is the buzzword in the industry right now," Meeker says. "Brides have been picking up on it and they think that's what they want for their weddings." But the truth is, while LEDs are environmentally friendly (they use less energy than traditional light sources), they lack versatility and are mediocre when it comes to light quality. "LEDs give off very rich colors, but that's not always the look we want entering an early evening reception." Traditional lights give off a softer, less-harsh hue.

**DO** be selective about colors

Certain shades of blue, purple, yellow and green can make guests look unattractive. Ambers and pinks are the most commonly used colors because they're romantic, neutral and soft. "If a bride chooses green as her wedding color, it can still be used for environmental lighting, but it takes some expert tricks to pull off," says Meeker.

**DON'T** use too many candles

Sure, small votives and big pillars are pretty, but they put out uncontrolled sources of light. A few on the tables is okay, but add too many and the room could get too bright. >>