light can help you

the front porch
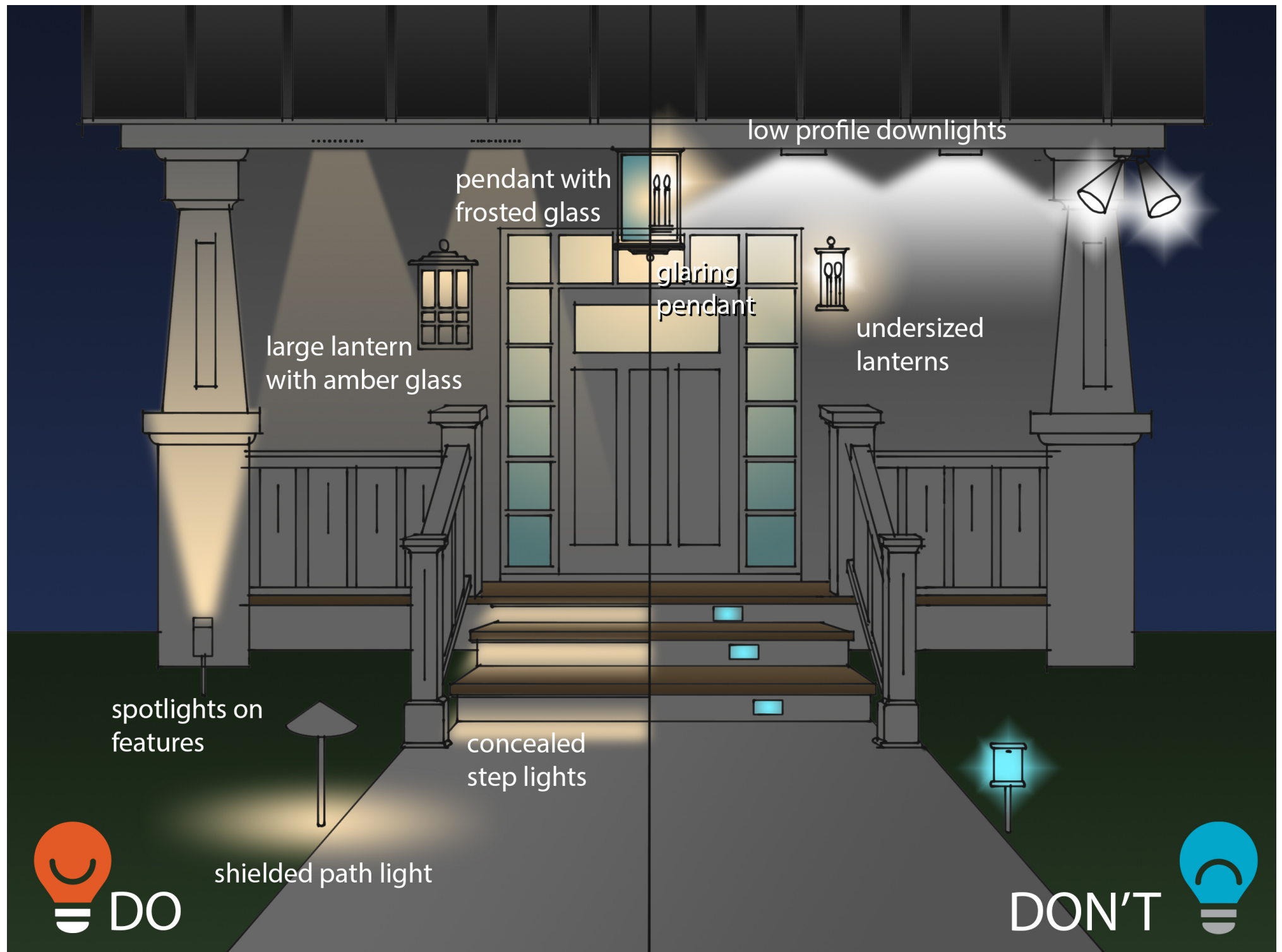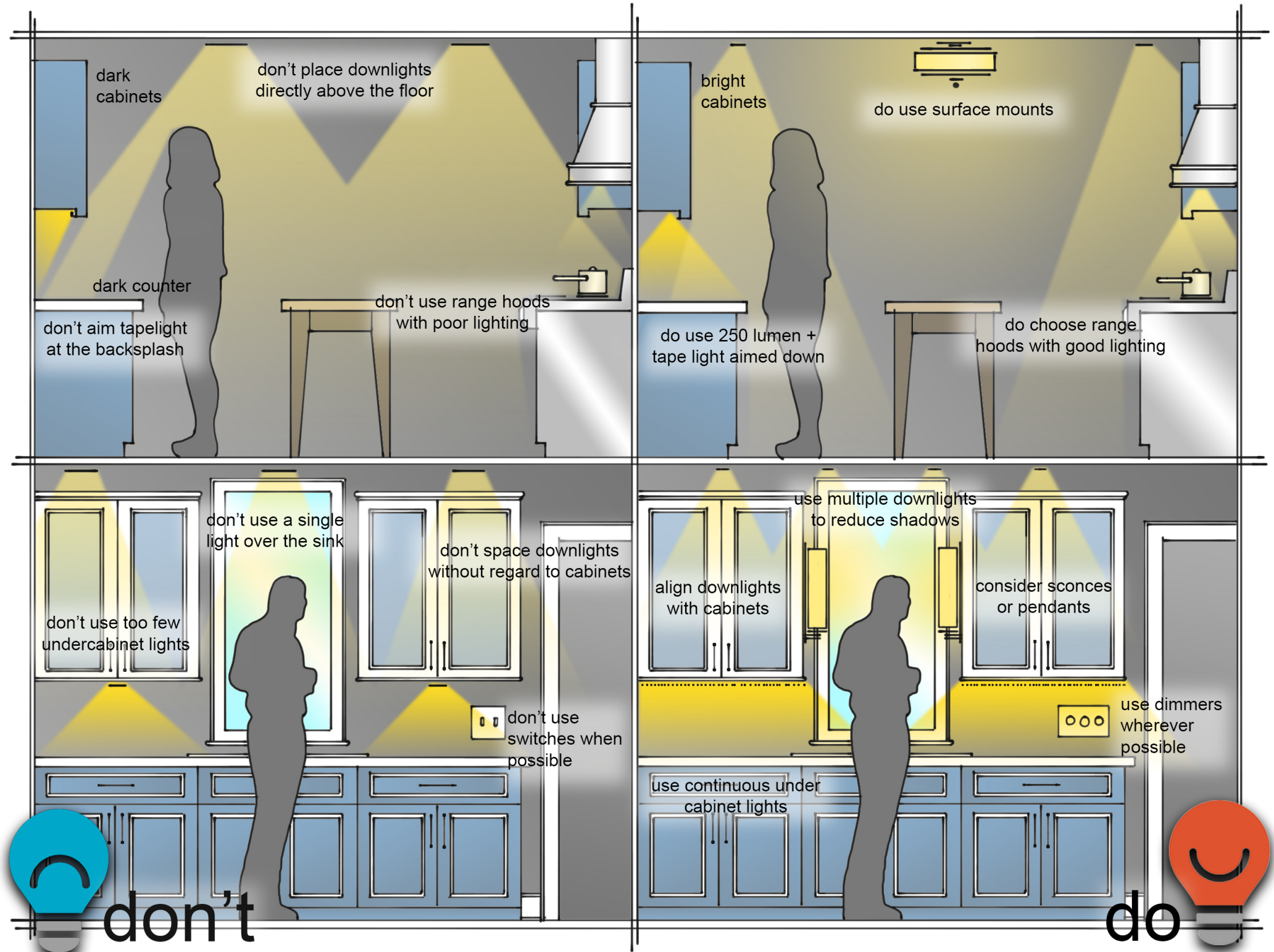
Good lighting will welcome you home and invite your guests to approach, but typical homes feature lights that look better turned off and cast glare while leaving pathways dark.

low profile downlights

pendant with frosted glass

glaring pendant

large lantern with amber glass

undersized lanterns

spotlights on features

concealed step lights
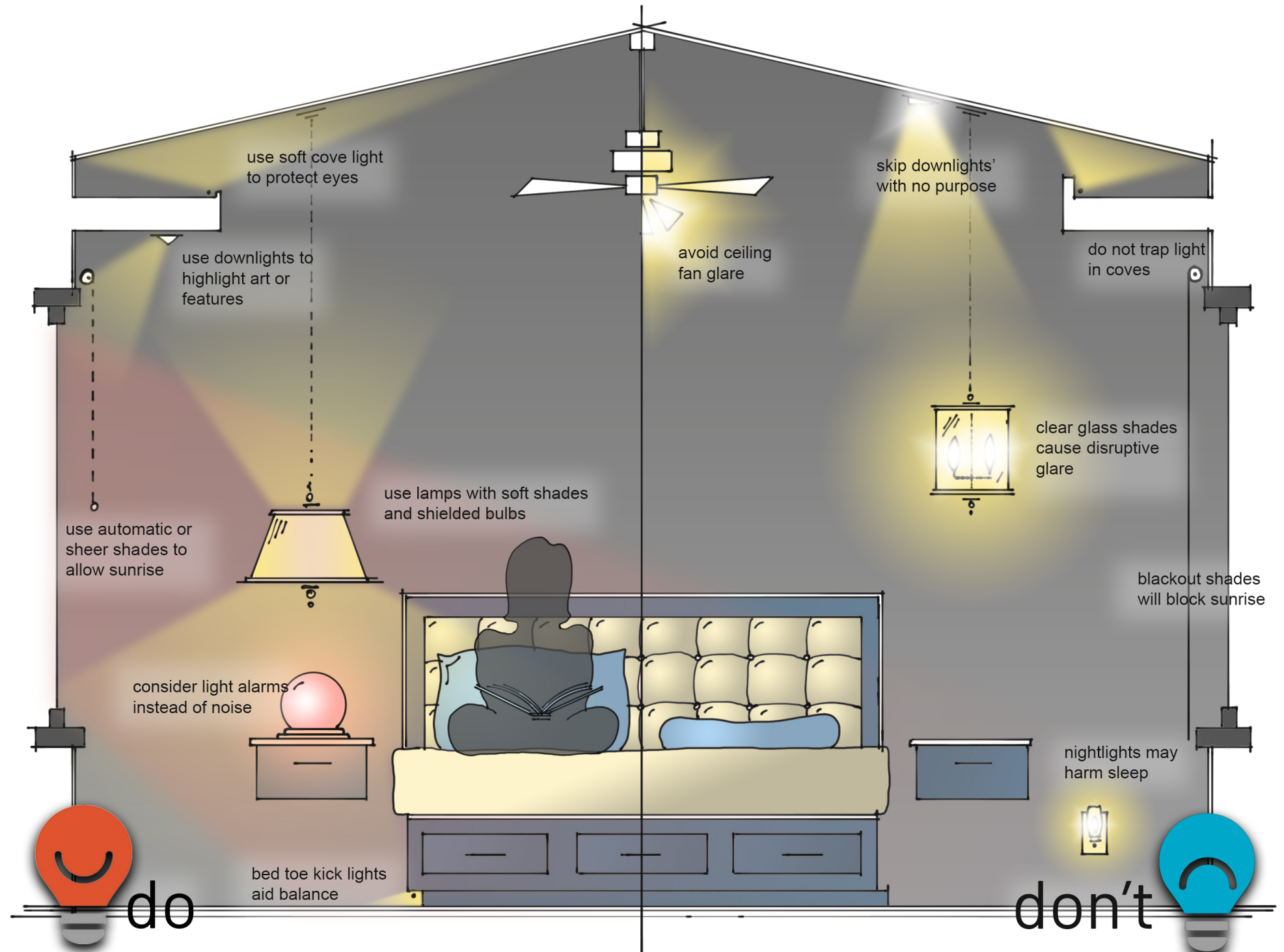
shielded path light

DO

DON'T

kitchen counters

Too many kitchens contain recessed downlights over the floor that create shadows on counters and ugly scallops on cabinets. Better lighting will increase your comfort and make it easier to see the kitchen knife.

don't

dark cabinets

don't place downlights directly above the floor

dark counter

don't aim tapelight at the backsplash

don't use range hoods with poor lighting

don't use a single light over the sink

don't space downlights without regard to cabinets

don't use too few undercabinet lights

don't use switches when possible

do

bright cabinets

do use surface mounts

do use 250 lumen + tape light aimed down

do choose range hoods with good lighting

use multiple downlights to reduce shadows

align downlights with cabinets

consider sconces or pendants

use continuous under cabinet lights
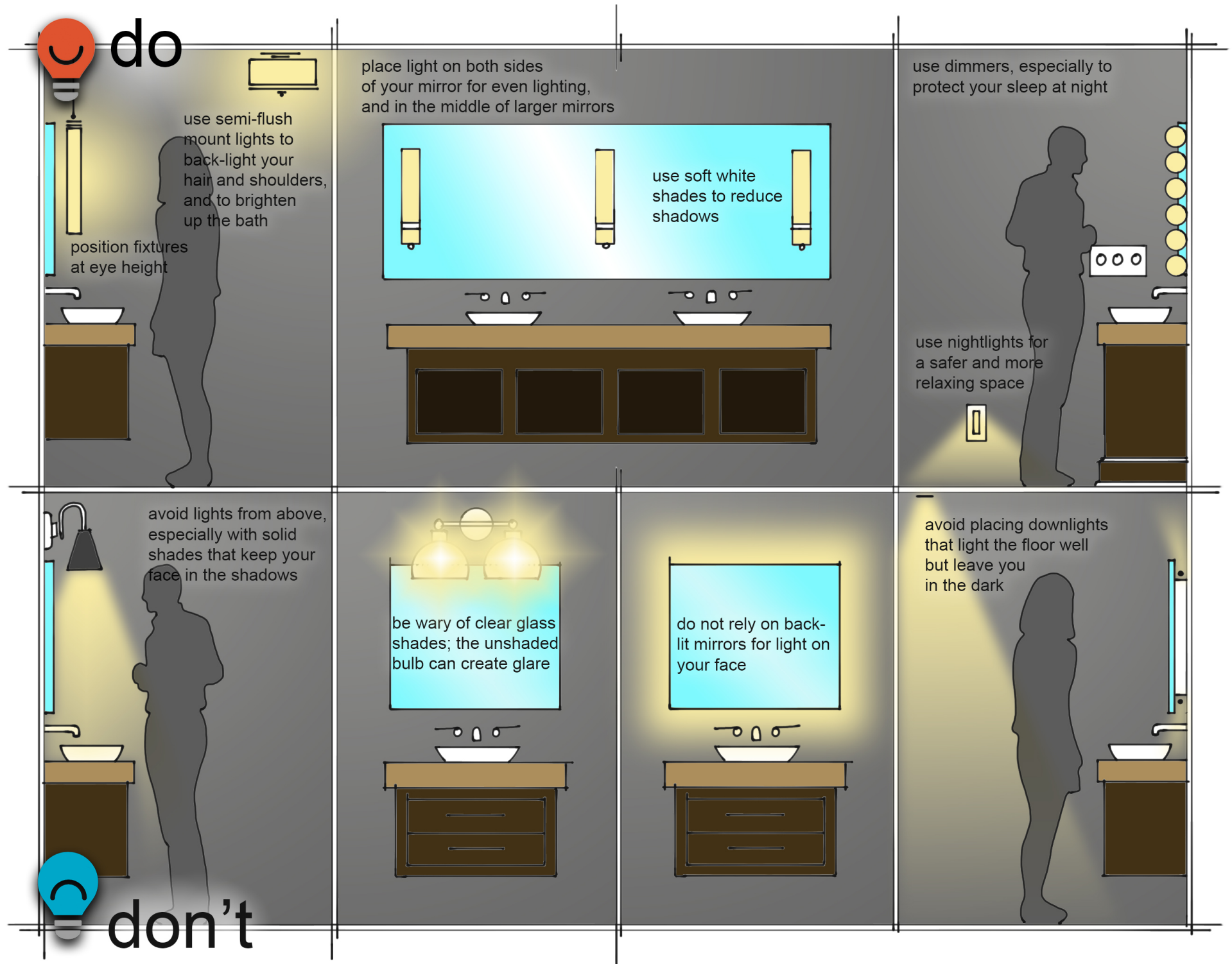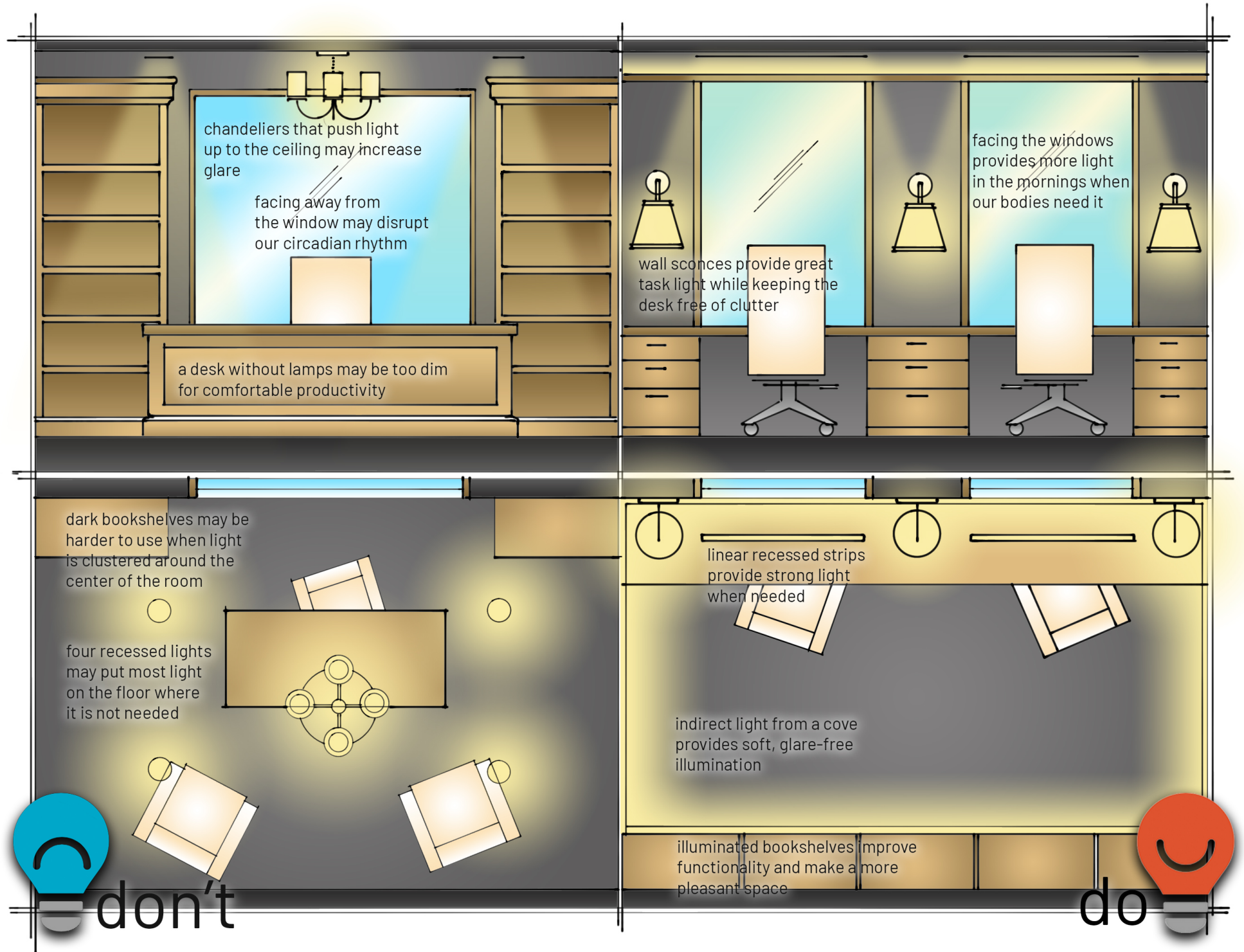
use dimmers wherever possible

bedrooms

Bedrooms can be a place of refuge that gently eases you off to sleep and softly supports your waking, but poorly planned lighting can cause sleep disruption and discomfort.

use soft cove light to protect eyes

use downlights to highlight art or features

avoid ceiling fan glare

skip downlights' with no purpose

do not trap light in coves

clear glass shades cause disruptive glare

use lamps with soft shades and shielded bulbs

use automatic or sheer shades to allow sunrise

blackout shades will block sunrise

consider light alarms instead of noise

nightlights may harm sleep

bed toe kick lights aid balance
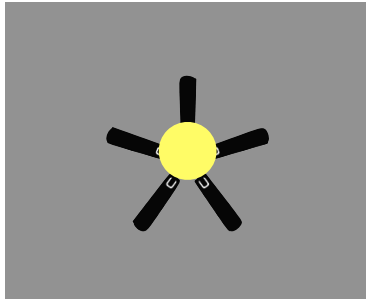
do

don't

vanities

Vanity lighting can help us look our best and see what we are doing, but many overhead light fixtures cause shadows that make us look older and tired.

do

use semi-flush mount lights to back-light your hair and shoulders, and to brighten up the bath

position fixtures at eye height

place light on both sides of your mirror for even lighting, and in the middle of larger mirrors

use soft white shades to reduce shadows

use dimmers, especially to protect your sleep at night

use nightlights for a safer and more relaxing space

don't

avoid lights from above, especially with solid shades that keep your face in the shadows

be wary of clear glass shades; the unshaded bulb can create glare

do not rely on back-lit mirrors for light on your face

avoid placing downlights that light the floor well but leave you in the dark

Lighting can help us stay focused and protect our natural rhythms...or cause eyestrain and fatigue. The difference is design.
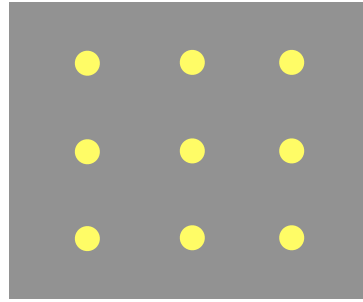
chandeliers that push light up to the ceiling may increase glare

facing away from the window may disrupt our circadian rhythm

a desk without lamps may be too dim for comfortable productivity

wall sconces provide great task light while keeping the desk free of clutter

facing the windows provides more light in the mornings when our bodies need it

dark bookshelves may be harder to use when light is clustered around the center of the room

four recessed lights may put most light on the floor where it is not needed

linear recessed strips provide strong light when needed

indirect light from a cove provides soft, glare-free illumination

illuminated bookshelves improve functionality and make a more pleasant space

don't

do

common lighting plan mistakes

CEILING FAN LIGHT SYNDROME

Ceiling fan lights can create harmful glare and leave important areas in shadow.

GEOMETRY VERSUS HUMANITY

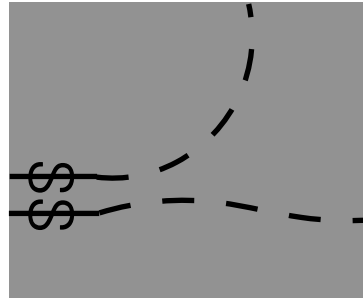Strict ceiling geometry may leave artwork, tables and seating areas in the dark.
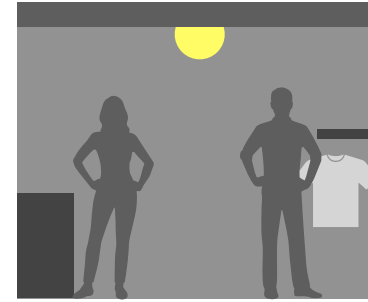
PERFECT SHADOWS

A single light in a closet or pantry puts you between the light and what you need to see.
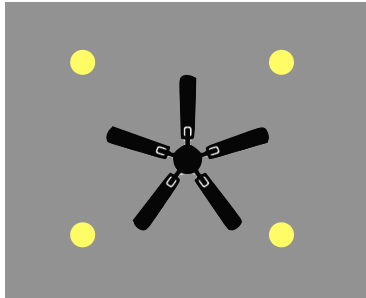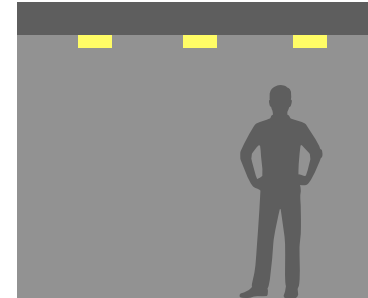
FOUR CANS AND A FAN

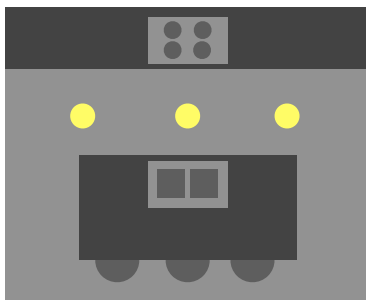"Four-cans-and-a-fan" looks good on plan but often puts most of the light on the floor.

BINARY EXISTENCE

One or two switches per room leave you with little adaptability for mood, task, wellness or age.
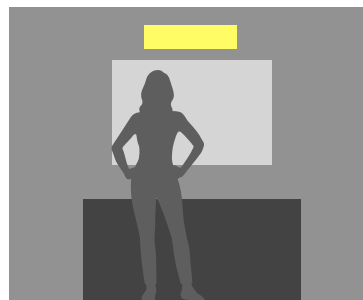
OVERHEAD DEPENDENCY

Dependence on overhead lighting can negatively affect your health and sleep cycles.
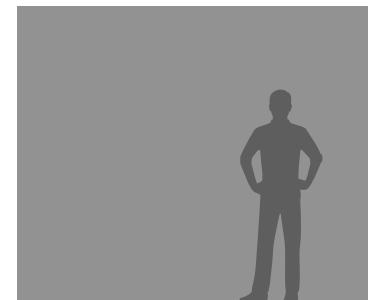
COUNTERTOP CAPER

Countertops in kitchens may be shadowed by downlights not placed directly overhead.

VANITY INSANITY

Lighting vanities from above may create harsh shadows on your face and under your chin.

DETAIL? WHAT DETAIL?

Most homes with beautiful ceiling details, beams, crown molding, and more use only recessed downlights that light make those very details harder to see.

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