Controlling Light Sources

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The information in this article applies to:

QUESTION

When I create a 3D camera view, my cabinets and other objects appear washed out, or do not have the definition that I want them to have. Why is this?

ANSWER

Lighting is extremely important in most 3D renderings. Lighting controls the visibility of objects in a view, affects the appearance of surfaces, and influences the appearances of colors and textures on those surfaces. Even small changes to light intensity, direction and color can have a large impact on image quality.

There are four types of light sources for 3D views:

- The Default Light is created by the program in any interior 3D view no other light sources have been added. The Default Light is essentially a Point Light, but cannot be adjusted in any way.

- Light Fixtures are editable symbol objects with one or more light sources associated with them. A selection of light fixtures is available in the Library Browser.

- The program creates a Sunlight to illuminate exterior 3D views. Sun light can also enter the interior through windows and glass doors. To modify the Sunlight's attributes, select **3D> Lighting> Adjust Sunlight** ☀.

- Added Lights are light sources that are not associated with fixtures. They can be used to add extra lighting effects, or to make objects like fireplaces or televisions emit light.

Here are some suggestions for improving the lighting in your 3D views:

- If you create an interior 3D view of a room with no light fixtures, the Default Light will be used to provide illumination in the scene. This should be enough to allow you to view the room, but may not sufficiently highlight objects or their materials. To improve the lighting, add light fixtures from the Library or using the Light tool.

- Added Lights can also be used to focus light in particular areas without adding a fixture. Use a Point Light to shine light in all directions from a single point, or use a Spot Light to shine light in a particular direction.

- If surfaces appear too bright or washed out, lower the amount of light in the scene. You can do this by reducing the number of light sources, turning some light sources off, or by adjusting their intensity. Light fixtures and Added Lights in a plan can be managed by selecting **3D> Lighting> Adjust Lights** 💡 to open the **Adjust Lights** dialog.

In Home Designer version 2018 and prior, the maximum number of light sources that can be turned on in a view at the same time was determined by your video card. If your video card's maximum number of lights is eight, the program only uses the eight light sources closest to the camera's position. You can manually turn on and off certain lights in order to get the desired lighting effects.