

The Colour Wheel

In this topic we look at decorating with colour and the role colour plays in interior design. We show you what colours work well together to create certain moods in your room.

We also explain a little about how you can use the colour wheel when planning a colour scheme to create rooms with dramatically different results, all of which work harmoniously.



Take a minute to look at the colour wheel (pictured here) and notice where the colours are in relationship to each other. The colour wheel shows colours that work together and the affect colours have in relation to each other.

To understand more about how the colour wheel can help to decorate read the following about colour relationships;



All within a third. All the colours within a third of the wheel (that any 4 adjacent colours in our wheel) will work well together in harmony.



Separated by a third. Any 3 colours spaced equally around the wheel work well although - it is best to have one as a dominant colour with the other two being used to 'setoff' the effect. Such a colour scheme can give an exciting effect.



Two across. Any two colours across the wheel are complementary. With one colour used as the dominant scheme, the other colour will 'set off' the effect.

Modern thinking is that there are 4 basic colours, Blue, Red, Green and Yellow, and every other colour used in paint and other decorations are variations of these four (and also black and white which are not considered as colours).

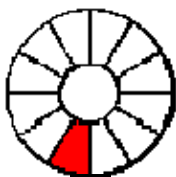
Although our Colour Wheel has just 12 colours, the colours vary continuously around the wheel with millions of possible shades.

Each colour is associated with a perception and their use can affect the way people feel and act - so the choice of colour in decorations needs to take into consideration the nature of the area being decorated.

- **Blue** - cold, of the sky and sea - relaxes, instils calmness and harmony. If used in large blocks, blue can make a room seem larger. Ideal for bedrooms and bathroom, not recommended for areas requiring stimulation or keeping awake, such as area for entertaining.
- **Red** - of anger and danger - stimulates and promotes activities. In large blocks it seems to advance towards you, so can seem to make rooms smaller. Ideal in areas of activity as it quickens the wits and stimulates - however it can be tiring for someone spending a lot of time surrounded by a lot of it. Not suitable where you need to relax such as bedrooms.
- **Green** - of nature - cleansing, instils contemplation. Ideal where you need to think such as in a study.

Yellow - of happiness - brightens the mood, makes one laugh and smile, refreshing and promotes intellectual activities. It can make rooms seem smaller. Ideal where a 'bright' mood is required such as

Monochromatic colours.



Most colours look great with shades from the same family as themselves—reds go with other reds, greens with greens. These are the popular monochromatic schemes, all drawn from a single colour.

Several shades of the same colour can be used to avoid the room looking too flat.

TIP: Darker shades will advance walls closer, potentially making the room appear smaller and lighter shades will retreat walls away hopefully making the room appear larger.

Single complementary colours.



Single complementary schemes are vibrant, lively and use two colours directly opposite each other on the colour wheel. A contrasting mood can be created using a dark warm colour and a light cool colour together. This scheme work best when one colour is used as a dominant colour.

TIP: Darker colours are often more dominant.

Split complementary colours



Split complementary schemes are those that look like a "Y" on the colour wheel. Any one colour is matched with the two colours directly either side of the colour opposite the original colour.

TIP: It's possible lighter shades can be overpowered using this method, think carefully about your space and design.

Triadic/Related.



Three colours are selected equal distance apart on the colour wheel. This scheme works best with one dominant colour and the other two being used as accents. Care must be taken as using triadic colours not to make a room look too "busy" and tiring.

The effect of light and the direction.

Southern facing rooms receive the 'purest' light for most of the day, so the colours are seen as fairly true.

In southern facing rooms, you can use almost any colour but remember that direct sunlight will make bright colours look brighter.

Eastern and western facing rooms have changing light. For an eastern window, the morning light is 'warm' and changes to a 'cold' light as the sun moves around the house. In westerns facing rooms, this is reversed with the 'cold' light in the morning and 'warm' light in the evening. East and west facing rooms can be more of a problem as the light changes with the time of day.

The use of the room can have an effect - if it is used mainly in the morning, decorate an eastern room as for a south facing room or a western room as if it were a north facing room. Reverse this if the room is mainly used in the evening.

If the room is used throughout the day, try a mix of warm and cold colours to complement the changing light.

Northern facing rooms tend to have 'cold' light all day; the advantage is that it is fairly constant throughout the day. In northern facing rooms, avoid cold colours, use bright and warm colours to counter the effect of the 'cold' light.