

## **The Power of Colour**

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<https://www.sutton.com/blog/home-improvement/the-power-of-colour>

Colour can make us calmer, more energized, improve our concentration, create the illusion of space, and even increase our appetites. Homeowners can use colour to highlight features of their home and enhance spaces for relaxation, socializing, studying, creative pursuits, and dining.

### **First, what is colour?**

The Crayola company, which knows a thing or two about colour, explains it this way: “Color is the aspect of things that is caused by differing qualities of light being reflected or emitted by them.” To see colour, you need light. Sunlight contains every colour of the rainbow, so it is known as white light. When it shines on an object, some colors bounce off the object and others are absorbed by it. Our eyes only see the reflected colors.

A white surface appears white to us because it absorbs no color and reflects all color equally. A black surface absorbs all colors equally and reflects none, so it looks black.

Each colour is on a different wavelength. The longest wavelength of light that humans can see is red. The shortest is violet. Colours can look different under artificial light.

### **Applying the theory**

Since colours change depending on the light source, products may look different at home than they do at the store. Request samples of paint, flooring, etc. and try them out at home under natural and artificial light at various times of the day.

### **How colours affect us**

Imagine you are standing in front of a wall of paint chips at the store. You probably like some options and dislike others. What you may not realize is that your preferences are rooted in physiology, cultural, fashion. For example, white is a colour of purity and peace in Western culture but one of mourning in Asian cultures.

Red a fascinating colour. It generates strong reactions, so much so that it can even increase heart rate. In one study, students who waited in a room painted red scored lower on their exams than a control group in an off-white room (Vetter 2019). In many countries, traffic signs are red and signify danger. But then again, red roses are romantic. As well, red (and orange) are known to increase appetite.

Many studies have been conducted on colour; one of the most ingenious and comprehensive of these considered 443 university students living on campus over several months (Costa 2018). Six separate residences were identical except the interior of each was painted in a different colour.

Within each building, some rooms were painted in lighter or darker shades of that same colour. Researchers made three discoveries: blue was the most popular; light blue and light green have a calming effect and improve concentration; and white ceilings made rooms seem more spacious.

### **How we respond to colour**

In general, we tend to have specific responses to colours (WebMD 2021):

Red: energy, warmth, motivation, and comfort

Orange: confidence, warmth, and creativity

Yellow: happiness, creativity, mental stimulation, and communication

Green: calm, optimism, balance, and problem-solving

Blue: tranquility, productivity, and peace

Purple: calming yet uplifting, creativity, and inspiration

### **Using colour in your home**

Accessories, artwork, flowers, furniture, cabinetry, and appliances are easy ways to add punches of colour to your home. For wall colour, you may wish to choose pale shades because full intensity can be overwhelming. Strong colours can work well on accent walls. Dark colours can make a space look smaller.

Studying and relaxation: Pale blue and green are good choices for an office, study spaces and bedrooms.

Dining and fitness: Touches of red, orange and yellow are stimulating.

Art and hobby areas: Enhance your creativity with yellow, blue, green, or purple as well as natural light.

With a very small investment of effort and money, you can harness the power of colour in your home.

### **Sources:**

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