

The colour theory



Colour theory is a practical guide to colour mixing and the visual impacts of colour combinations.

In Scientific terms colour is light, and light is composed of many colours- those we see are the colours of the visual spectrum: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet. When light hits an object, that object reflects certain wavelengths of colour back and absorbs other. It is the wavelengths that are reflected back that we perceive as colour.

For our purposes the fundamental rule is that there are three colours that cannot be made by mixing other colours together. These colours are known as the Primary colours and are red, blue, and yellow - all other colours are variations of these mixed together.

Colour theory is usually explained with the aid of a colour wheel: A visual representation of colours arranged according to their chromatic relationship.

Traditionally we put the three primary colours in the centre of the wheel as seen below.

Begin a colour wheel by positioning primary hues equidistant from one another, and then create a bridge between primaries using secondary and tertiary colours

Colour is the easiest and most effective way of instantly creating a mood for every room in your home.

Try using warm, advancing colours in areas where you want people to feel welcomed such as living rooms, dining rooms and halls.

You may want to make your bathroom a relaxing, stress free spa with watery colours reminiscent of the sea. Or you may want to nudge your family to get going in the morning and inject some energy with splashes of zesty acid pastels. Take your inspiration from nature.

You may want your dining room to be smart and formal for lots of corporate entertaining with navy blue or you may want a relaxed, informal feel where all the family can chill.

A chic, contemporary bedroom could be conjured from layering neutrals or create a dramatic boudoir with purples and reds.

Play around with lighting to create moods for different situations, for example, romantic, practical, formal, entertaining etc.

Linking rooms with colour

You may have loads of ideas for different colour schemes in each room of your house and be dying to give them all a try. But stop and think of the overall effect when all the doors are open and you can see into each room. In a smaller house this can tend to look a bit of a mish-mash.

If you'd like to draw the whole scheme together, choose an overall colour for the entire house and then use it in different ways in each room. Larger houses are slightly more forgiving as long as you pay attention to the meeting points.

Choose harmonious colours. You could paint one room blue, the adjacent one a greeny blue, the next purple etc.

Alternatively stick to one colour but use a different tone of it for each room, for example, going from a pale shade of blue to a dark one. This works especially well if your rooms open into one another.

If one room is wallpapered, try picking out one shade from it to paint the next room or use the background colour of the wallpaper as your base colour.

To unify your whole house, keep all the woodwork the same colour - preferably white. If you are going for neutrals on your walls, get some paint mixed up for your woodwork that is a ratio of one part of your neutral colour with three parts white. You can use the same shade on your ceiling.

Don't forget the colour on the opening side of the door into the next room - it doesn't have to match but pick a shade that won't jar.