

# Creating Color Effects

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surrounds us and affects nearly every aspect of our lives - it is the single most important factor in creating spaces that reflect individual mood and style. We are soothed by certain colours and stimulated by others. We use colour to describe our world - to change a house into a home.

Since the human eye can perceive millions of different colours deciding on the best colours to decorate your home is no simple task. Even if you limit your choice to one colour family, there are still thousands of variations to choose from. So it's important to understand the effects of the temperature of colour, how light affects colour as well as the effects that juxtaposed and complementary colours can create.

A colour is categorized as cool or warm depending on its place in the colour spectrum. Warm colours promote a feeling of warmth in a room. They tend to advance space and are used to make walls appear closer. Cool colours seem to enlarge the space in a room by making the walls appear further away. Red, orange and yellow are examples of warm colours, while violet and blue are classified cool colours. Green is known as the most neutral colour.

While just about everyone is familiar with the magic formula that 'warm colours advance and cool colours recede,' creating colour effects is also dependent upon value (lightness or darkness) and intensity (saturation or purity) in addition to temperature. For example, a bold green or blue can advance space or make a room seem smaller while a subtle red or pale yellow can create a sense of greater space.

Colour complements are those colours that intensify each other and are directly opposite each other on the colour wheel. Each warm colour has a cool colour as its complement.

Complementary colours create contrast in a room to effectively balance and liven up the space. For instance, if you use red and green together in a room, each colour will appear more intense than when used alone.

Light can play tricks on the way we perceive colour as well. One corner of a room painted blue for example, may appear to be a different shade from the rest of the room because colours reflect light, which changes its appearance.

Most colours are associated with certain emotions, which vary from culture to culture. According to author Nell Frances in her article Colour Facts and Colour Effects, the following are some of the of the most popular colour associations:

- Red: power, passion, courage, vitality, excitement, strength, speed,

love, heart and warmth.

- Yellow: light, cheer, sunlight, happiness, creativity, confidence, self-esteem, intellect, innovation.

- Blue: caring, devotion, trust, wisdom, peacefulness, serenity, loyalty, truth, coolness, harmony.

- Green: nature, fresh, growth, abundance, life, youth, renewal, hope, fertility, peace, balance.

- Orange: energy, warmth, contentment, fruitfulness, strength, security, sensuality, abundance.

- White: pure light, energy, truth, perfection, serenity, harmony, loyalty, sincerity, clarity.

- Black: formal, reserved, drive, dignity, reliability, authority, power, prudence, wisdom, glamour.

Remember, when choosing your decorating colours, it is important to consider not only how those colours will affect your space but also the effects that the colours will have on the people living there.

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