



Professional Tips For Choosing The Perfect Paint Colors



Choosing the right paint colors for your home (the first time) can be a difficult and somewhat overwhelming task. If you struggle with this...don't feel bad. With my business, Rekindled Spaces, I have consulted over 1,000 homeowners on color in my 17+ years as a paint contractor but when it came to choosing colors for my new lake house fixer upper...it was tough. You see...it's super easy for me to pick out colors for someone else's home but when it's my space...I tend to second guess myself.

Today, I am going to give you some professional tips that will help you pick the right colors...the first time.



UNDERSTANDING A PAINT STRIP:

When looking at a paint strip, the strip itself is its "shade" of color. As you go down the strip, the shade's level of saturation increases...this is called its "Hue". Each of the paint strips above have 7 hues. The higher the saturation, the more tint in the paint color. The tint is what makes the color blue, green, yellow, red, gray, brown, etc... so..by looking at the bottom of the paint strip (the color with the most saturation), you can tell what tint was used to make each of the colors on that strip.



As you look at the same 4 color strips side by side, you notice each strip's shade is different...but...if you were to choose the 4th box down on each of the strips...all of the shades would have the same hue.

Right now you are saying to yourself, "Why does this matter"?

It matters because when you walk into a paint store and are faced with thousands of paint strips to choose from, you will have the knowledge and confidence to select a handful of options based on these tips.

Okay. Okay...I know...enough with the science behind the paint strip. I must confess...I am kind of a paint nerd so I will probably give you way more insight into this subject than you need but...if you listen to me...you will pick the perfect paint colors...the first time.

CHOOSING A COLOR SCHEME:

A color scheme is the choice of colors used in design and are used to create design and style. With colors you can set a mood, attract attention, or make a statement. You can use color to energize, or to cool down. By selecting the right color scheme, you can create an ambiance of elegance, warmth or tranquility, or you can convey an image of playful youthfulness. Color can be your most powerful design element if you learn to use it effectively.

The 2 most popular color schemes are monochromatic (one-color) scheme or polychromatic (multiple-color) scheme? Let me explain both in more detail.

MONOCHROMATIC

photo credit: Ecoluxe Studios
A monochromatic scheme utilizes several different hues and tints from the same paint strip. This is by far the easiest way to make sure your colors flow. So...for example, if you were using one of the paint chips above, you may choose one of the medium hues for the walls, the lightest hue for the ceiling and a couple of the darker hues for accent walls and/or furniture pieces.



Photo credit:
[Ecoluxe Studios](#)

PROS:

- Very safe way to choose color
- All of the colors share varying levels of the same tint so they will not clash
- Very clean look

CONS:

- Can tend to be a little boring for some
- If you are not careful, the entire house will look the same

POLY-CHROMATIC

Poly-chromatic schemes use colors from different paint strips aka different shades of color. The easiest way to mix different colors is to choose ones that occupy the same location on a paint strip. For example, choose a blue, green and yellow that are the 3rd hue on their paint strip.



Photo credit:

[John David Edison Interior Design](#)

PROS:

- Adds interest and character to a room
- Unlimited color combinations to choose from

CONS:

- Much more difficult to choose colors that work together
- If overdone, the room can be overstimulating
- Can tire of it easily
- More difficult to redecorate

You may think you know you've figured out your color scheme but keep reading because what I tell you next may change your mind.

I actually use a combination of both in my home. I switch it up depending on the room. I have a monochromatic scheme for my bedroom and guest bedroom. I let the boys choose their colors for their rooms so needless to say...they are red, blue and a little yellow (Kansas Jayhawks Baby!!!). In my main living space, I chose a monochromatic scheme for the walls, trim, ceilings and furniture and added punches of color in the accessories. My point is...you don't have to be stuck with just one scheme. It may vary from room to room or you may choose to break all of the rules and if you do...awesome but you may make some color mistakes along the way...and that is okay too.

6 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A COLOR SCHEME:

1) *YOUR PERSONALITY*

Go into your closet and see what color you tend to wear the most. Fashion and home decor go hand in hand. If you are not trendy in your wardrobe...don't try to be trendy in your home design.

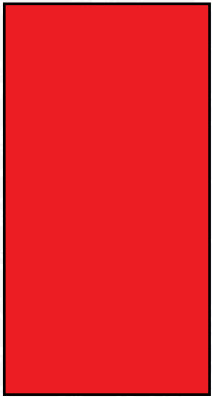
2) *LIGHTING*

- Natural
 - North-facing rooms: Light in these rooms is cool and bluish. Bolder colors show up better than muted colors; lighter colors will look subdued.
 - South-facing rooms: Lots of high-in-the-sky light brings out the best in cool and warm colors. Dark colors will look brighter; lighter colors will virtually glow.
 - East-facing rooms: East light is warm and yellowy before noon, then turns bluer later in the day. These are great rooms for reds, oranges and yellows.
 - West-facing rooms: Evening light in these rooms is beautiful and warm, while scant morning light can produce shadows and make colors look dull.
- Artificial
 - Incandescents: The warm, yellow-amber light of these bulbs will make reds, oranges, and yellows more vivid, while muting blues and greens.
 - Fluorescents: This flat and cool light enriches blues and greens.
 - Halogens: These white lights resemble natural light and make all colors look more vivid. Using halogens would make the shift from daylight to artificial light less jarring.
 - Compact fluorescent lights (CFLs): [CFLs](#) can produce either a warm white, neutral, or bluish-white light depending on light chosen.
 - Light-emitting diodes (LEDs): You can buy warmer or cooler [LEDs](#), and even "smart" LED bulbs which allow you to control the color.

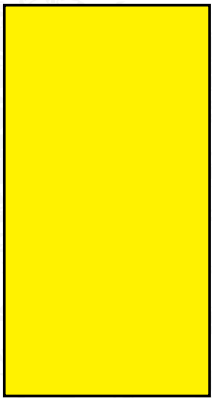
3) *MOOD / FUNCTION*

Mood and Function go hand in hand. Once you understand that colors behave in three basic ways : active, passive, and neutral, you can easily choose colors that create the perfect vibe for the room's specific purpose.

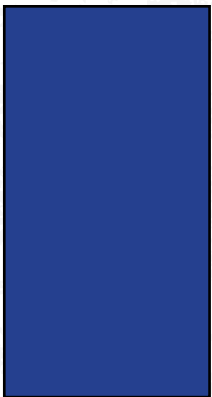
I pulled this excerpt on color and how it affects our mood from www.freshome.com...



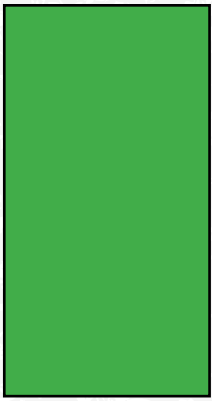
Red raises a room's energy level. It is a good choice when you want to stir up excitement, particularly at night. In the living room or dining room, red draws people together and stimulates conversation. In an entryway, it creates a strong first impression. Red has been shown to raise blood pressure, speed respiration and heart rate. It is usually considered too stimulating for bedrooms, but if you're only in the room after dark, you'll be seeing it mostly by lamplight, when the color will appear muted, rich, and elegant. Red, the most intense, pumps the adrenaline like no other hue.



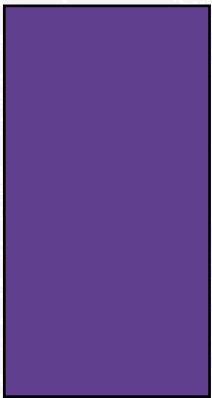
Yellow captures the joy of sunshine and communicates happiness. It is perfect for kitchens, dining rooms, and bathrooms, where happy colors are energizing and uplifting. In halls, entries, and small spaces, yellow can feel expansive and welcoming. Even though yellow although is a cheery color, it is not a good choice to use in main color schemes when it comes to designing a room. Studies show that people are more likely to lose their temper in a yellow interior. Babies also seem to cry more in a yellow room. In large amounts, this color tends to create feelings of frustration and anger in people.



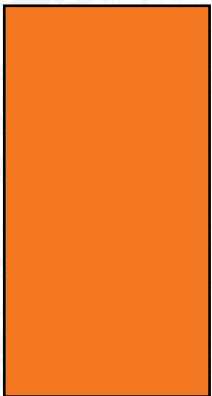
Blue is said to bring down blood pressure and slow respiration and heart rate. That is why it is considered calming, relaxing and serene, and it is often recommended for bedrooms and bathrooms. Be careful, however: a pastel blue that looks pretty on the paint chip can come across as unpleasantly chilly when it is on the walls and furnishings, especially in a room that receives little natural light. If you opt for a light blue as the primary color in a room, balance it with warm hues for the furnishings and fabrics. To encourage relaxation in the social areas (family rooms, living rooms, large kitchens) consider warmer blues, such as periwinkle, or bright blues, such as cerulean or turquoise. Blue is known to have a calming effect when used as the main color of a room. Go for softer shades of blue. Dark blue has the opposite effect, evoking feelings of sadness. So refrain from using darker blues in your main color scheme. Stay with the lighter shades of blue to give you and your loved ones a calm effect.



Green is considered the most restful color for the eye. Combining the refreshing quality of blue and the cheerfulness of yellow, green is suited for almost any room on the house. In the kitchen, green cools things down; in a family room or living room, it encourages unwinding but has enough warmth to promote comfort and togetherness. Green also has a calming effect when used as a main color for decorating. It is believed to relieve stress by helping people relax. Also believed to help with fertility, making it a great choice for the bedroom.



Purple in its darkest values (eggplant, for example) is rich, dramatic, and sophisticated. It is associated with luxury as well as creativity, and as an accent or secondary color, it gives a scheme depth. Lighter versions of purple, such as lavender and lilac, bring the same restful quality to bedrooms as blue does, but without the risk of feeling chilly.



Orange evokes excitement, enthusiasm and is an energetic color. While not a good idea for a living room or for bedrooms, this color is great for an exercise room. It will bring out all the emotions that you need released during your fitness routine. In ancient cultures orange was believed to heal the lungs and increase energy levels. [gallery ids="14314,14317,14316"]

Neutrals (black, gray, white, and brown) are basic to the decorator's tool kit. All-neutral schemes fall in and out of fashion, but their virtue lies in their flexibility: Add color to liven things up; subtract it to calm things down. Black is best used in small doses as an accent. Indeed, some experts maintain that every room needs a touch of black to ground the color scheme and give it depth. To make the job easier, you can rely on the interior designer's most important color tool: the color wheel.

4) *SIZE OF THE ROOM*

- Measure the width of all 4 walls. Add the 4 numbers together and multiply it by the height. For example, if the room is 9' wide x 12' long with 8' ceilings, you would add $9' + 9' + 12' + 12' = 42' \times 8' = 336$ square ft.
- Want an easier way to know how much paint you need? Try this [paint calculator](#) from Benjamin Moore
- You will want this number for a couple of reasons:
 - To know how much paint to buy. One gallon of paint typically covers 400 sq ft with one coat of paint. I always recommend two coats. Take your measurements with you to make sure you get enough paint per manufacturer specs the first time...it is almost impossible to match it exactly the same again.
 - It will help to pick your paint color. You see...dark colors make a room seem smaller or more intimate. On the flip side...lighter colors make a room seem more open and airy.

5) *HOW THE HOME TRANSITIONS FROM ROOM TO ROOM*

There is nothing wrong with color but make sure your choices flow from one room to the next.

6) *FURNISHINGS*

Steer clear of white or off-white walls if you have bold accessories such as a bright blue rug or a vibrant red couch. The red can cast a pink tone on a white wall...oh no!

7) *SHEEN*

The sheen of the paint also affects color. Glossy finishes will reflect light and change the way the color looks, whereas flat finishes are less reflective and allow colors to look truer under bright light.

- Gloss - highest sheen
- Semi-gloss - used mostly for trim and cabinetry
- Satin - perfect for walls
- Eggshell - perfect for walls but less sheen than satin
- Flat - best for ceilings

8) *AND MOST IMPORTANT...HAVE A PLAN!!!*

People don't plan to fail...they fail to plan. Find your inspirational pieces first such as a rug, artwork or a bedspread. Then choose your paint colors off of that. Trust me on this...Pick your paint colors last!

ADDITIONAL TOOLS AVAILABLE FOR HELPING WITH COLOR SELECTION

1. [Personal Color Viewer](#) - Want to see what colors will look like in your space BEFORE you paint? The Personal Color Viewer by Benjamin Moore allows you to explore paint color combinations with the sample room designs or upload your own to create the perfect look for your space.
2. [Color Capture App](#) - Use this digital app to snap a picture of anything that catches your eye and instantly find its match from our collection of more than [3,500 paint colors](#)

Bonus: If you are a designer, contractor or architect, you can order larger swatches of the colors you've selected [here](#).

Okay let's put all of these wheels in motion:

1. Begin by taking a paint color quiz.
2. Answer the questions on the paint quiz. This will help you decide on a color scheme
3. Use one of the additional color selection tools if needed
4. Go to your paint store of choice and select several paint strips based on your selected criteria Tip: You don't have to buy from a certain paint line just because you like one of their colors. Most paint stores will do a color match for you.
5. Once you have narrowed down to between a couple of colors, order a sample container of each. For example...if you think you love BM Revere Pewter..then buy a color sample of Revere Pewter before you invest the time and expense in painting an entire room. They cost just under \$7.00 and can be purchased through your local retail store or [online](#).
6. Paint squares of primed drywall or primed poster board with samples of the colors you're considering, and then move them around the room during the day. Apply at least two coats to get the true color.
7. Remember that natural and artificial light will change the color during certain times of day, especially in summer when dusk lasts a long time. Look at the samples in all light situations...turn on artificial lights even during daylight to see what your colors will look like.
8. Before you order your paint, recruit a couple of friends that you trust for a second and third opinion

And last but certainly not least...don't forget the 5th wall...your ceiling. Your ceiling makes up 1/6 of the rooms square footage yet it typically gets painted bright white (I have honestly seen them not painted at all). Choose a color that complements your wall color. A light color makes the ceilings look taller. A dark color drops the ceiling down a bit.

In the end...remember...this is your home. Take risks where you want and play it safe where you need to. Never let anyone embarrass you or guilt you into following the "rules of color". Who made these rules up anyway?

Here is my rule..."Love where you live and... live where your loved". You can't go wrong there my friends.

Is painting the first step in your home renovation? If so, here are a couple more tutorials you might like: