

## COLOR RESPONSES

**Technical description of color:** Color is a function of light as defined by a physicist. The current accepted theory is energy from the sun consists of a series of separate energy packets traveling as continuous electromagnetic waves. These electromagnetic waves stimulate color sensations in our visual perception when they strike objects.

It is also universally accepted that colors affect us emotionally. Bright reds, oranges, and yellows tend to stimulate us, while blues and greens often make us feel more peaceful. Colors then are used in design to express emotions and even to evoke them.

### Warm Colors

A person's response to the colors around them has been studied and researched by color psychologists. The responses noted are dependent on a number of factors, one of course being the hue, or value of the color. In general, colors are grouped into two categories Warm Colors and Cool Colors. We associate the colors of fire (red, orange, yellow) as warm. Psychological research has shown that under red lighting there is an increase in adrenaline, increasing our blood pressure and our rate of breathing. Yellows and oranges have a similar effect, though they are not as warming as a saturated red.

When decorating a space it's important to know how the space is going to be used. Consider using a warm color for an energetic, friendly and welcoming space.

**Red** is an appetite stimulant, encourages action, and is associated with passion. Red in a dining room will stimulate the appetite, and in an exercise room stimulate activity.

**Orange** is also stimulating, but is less intense than red. It is considered cheery and friendly. Why not consider a color in the warm tones – cinnamon or bronze for an accent wall or a piece of furniture in a room where the main purpose is for a social gathering.

**Yellow** is a highly visible color and therefore draws attention. It receives a welcoming response and is good at entrances, especially in cold gloomy grey climates. It stimulates the intellect, concentration and communication. It represents health and is uplifting. It is good for clarity of the mind and thought, and therefore is a good choice for a home office or a room where you study or exchange information. Consider a rich saturated golden color on the walls with furniture in the dark warm wood tones or a pale yellow at the reception area of a home.

### Cool Colors

In contrast to warm colors, cool colors remind us of water, landscapes and cool mornings.

Physiological research has shown that green or blue lights will slow our heartbeat, decrease our temperature, and relax our muscles.

Maybe you want to create a space that is calming, or a sanctuary from the hustle and bustle of a busy workday. Cool colors will provide this for you.

**Green** is associated with nature and is relaxing to the eye. It symbolizes balance, harmony and rejuvenation. It is a good choice for a restful yet energizing room.

**Blue** is the color of the sky and is said to stimulate creativity, inspiration and inner peace. It is a wonderful choice for bedrooms, meditation rooms and rooms to reduce hyperactivity in children.

**Violet** is associated with power or wealth, in a symbolic, regal manner. Other times it is whimsical. Lavender, a lighter value of violet, is a good for healing.

But the balance of color is also important and can be achieved by adding multiple colors into a space. A complementary color is the color on the opposite side of the color wheel. When blended together they provide a balance to the space.

## TODAY'S TRENDS

An international color-consulting group yearly looks at trends of the cultures around the world, technology, commerce and consumer to develop a collection of colors by theme. Each collection is inspired by the daily interaction of these areas both at home and abroad giving the group the source of color inspiration. This year there are earth-inspired trends, environmentally focused, and a simplification

**Cultural** – There is a comfort to saturated colors used by some of the world's oldest cultures: African, Aboriginal and Native American. There is an influence converging to create a new tribal style with colors that are rich and earthy: sand, amber yellow, teal, putty, yellow red, and dark brown.

**Recycling** – This is the year to find that treasure in the local flea market with exposed, paint layers or from a local artisan's hand made collection. Each piece is unique and has a story. The palette of colors reflects the beauty of natural aging, mellowing and weathering,: creams, blue-green, coral, lemon yellow, smoky blue, and brown.

**Simplicity** – Aren't we always trying to simplify our lives? This color palette helps you achieve the look, with a timelessness yet modern sophistication. The modern feel of "Less is more" has made a come back in a big way. Shape and structure are highlighted with attention to the aesthetics tailored lines and sheer and translucent fabrics and furnishings. Clarity and integrity are critical. The hues are calm and subtle: creamy white, yellow, cool grey, blue grey, and purple grey.

**Fresh** – Cheery, sunny and saturated tropical colors helps to transport us to another place far away. Happy spaces are filled with fresh floral fabrics, bright colors and lively combinations of color. It is the '60's and 80's combined with cultural influences creating a bohemian style: yellow, yellow orange, salmon pink, yellow green, blue, and violet

## Color Definitions:

**Color Wheel:** The traditional **color wheel** is made up of twelve color families: red, red-orange, orange, yellow-orange, yellow, yellow-green, green, blue-green, blue-red-violet, violet and blue-violet.

**Complementary color:** A **complementary color** is the color on the opposite side of the color wheel. These 2 colors blend well together in a setting – such as red and green (Christmas).

**Saturation:** Colors in their purest, most brilliant state have a maximum intensity, or **saturation**. Saturation is the only way of describing the variations of colors.

**Hue:** A **hue** identifies the quality of a general family by a color such as red, yellow, or blue.

**Value:** A color **value** defines the brightness of a specific color, how light or dark it is. As the value of the hue becomes lighter, it generally appears to be cooler.

**Warm Colors:** Hues in the red area of the color wheel are often referred to as “warm”.

**Cool Colors:** Hues in the blue area of the color wheel are often referred to as “cool”.

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Reference: [Color](#) by Paul Zelanski and Mary Pat Fisher, Prentice Hall, c 1989