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Color Wheel Primer

Learn the basics of the color wheel, types of color schemes and color dimensions.

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By: Jennifer Huskey and Hilary Johnson

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When you're decorating, choosing a color scheme can be a perplexing task. It's hard enough whittling down your choice to one or two colors — but then to have to mix and match even more of them into an eye-pleasing scheme? Sometimes considering the whole color wheel is just too much to ask.

Before you turn back on the world of color, get a grasp of the color wheel and how it works.

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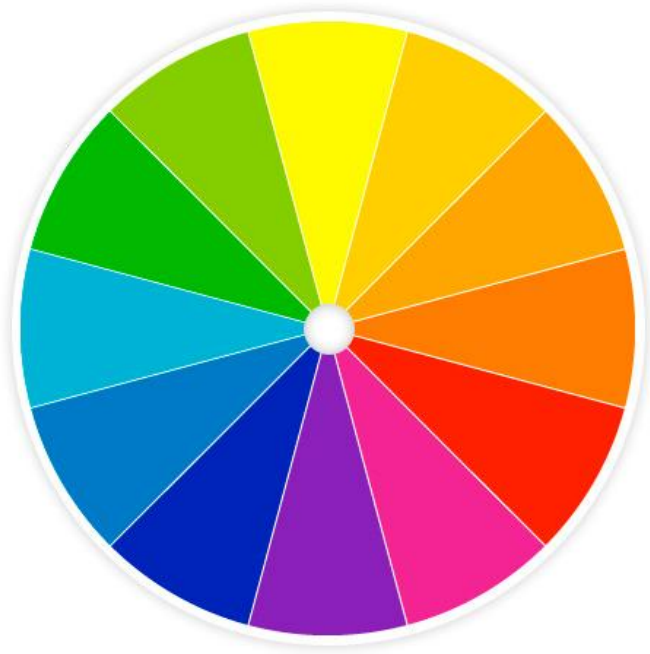
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The Basic Wheel

In 1666, Sir Isaac Newton performed a prism experiment in which he discovered that pure white light contains the full spectrum of colors — in effect, creating the world's first color wheel. From there, philosophers, scientists, artists and designers have continued studying the components of color and its physical, psychological and philosophical effects.

Newton's wheel is made up of 12 colors, which are classified into three categories:

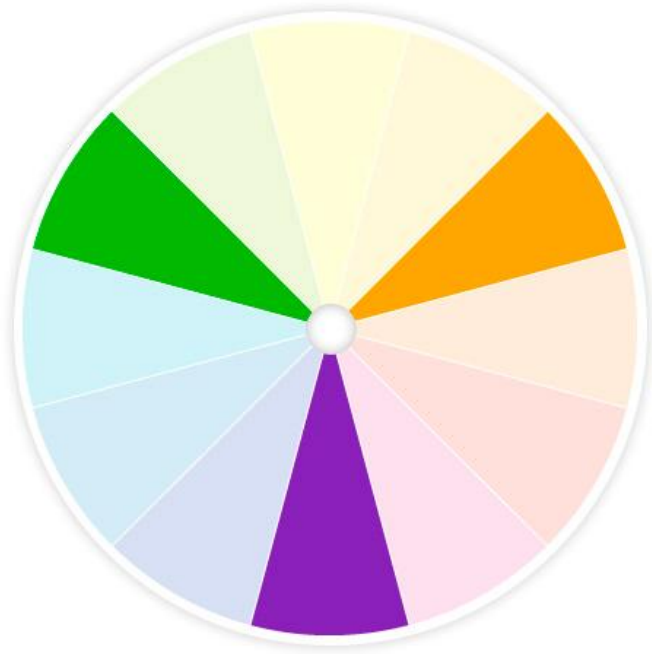


Primary Colors: Red, Yellow and Blue



Secondary Colors: Orange, Green and Violet

Secondary colors are created by mixing primary colors.



Tertiary Colors

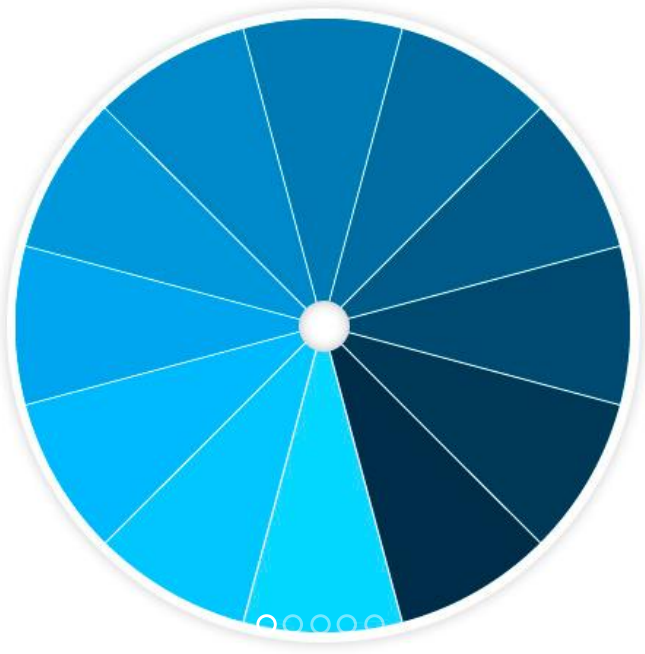
Tertiary colors are a combination of a secondary color and a primary color next to it. They include yellow-orange, red-orange, red-violet, blue-violet, blue-green and yellow-green.



Color Schemes

Now that you know the colors here are four common ways to use them in your home.

One Color – Monochromatic



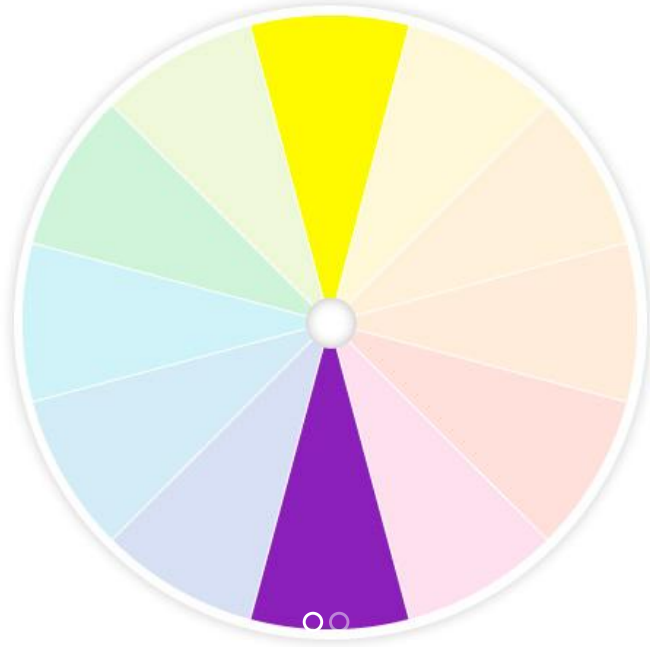
Take baby-steps toward color with a monochromatic scheme. It's simply one color in varying intensities from light to dark.

Two to Six Colors – Analogous



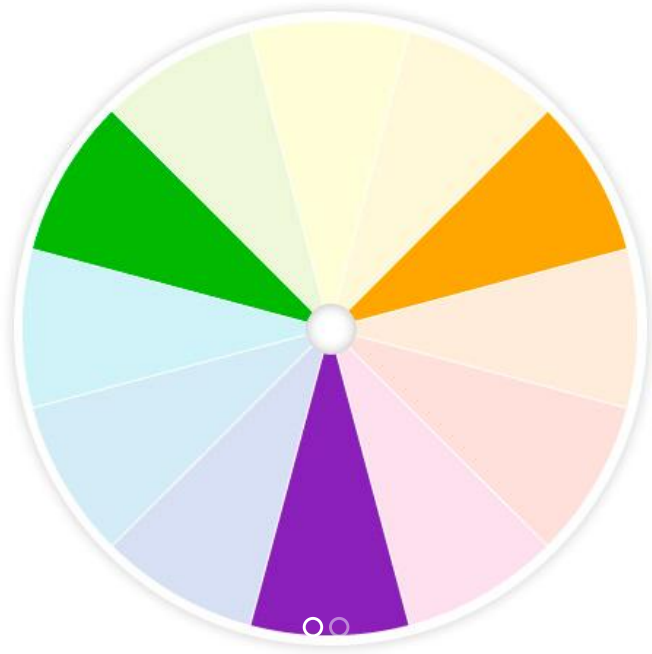
Branch out into color with an analogous scheme, which consists of two to six colors that sit next to each other on the wheel.

Two Colors — Complementary



Want to go for high-contrast color? Use a complementary scheme — it includes hues that are directly across from each other on the wheel.

Three Colors — Triad



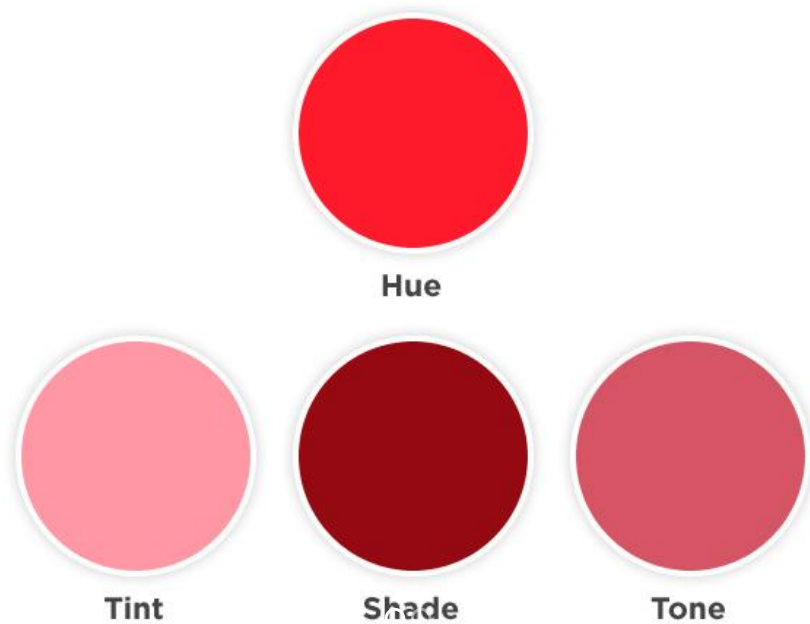
A triad scheme is bold but more importantly, it's balanced. It's made up of any three colors that form a triangle in the center of the wheel.

Color Dimensions

In addition to understanding how colors work together, it's also helpful to know the three dimensions of the colors on the wheel.

Hue is commonly used interchangeably with the word color but technically refers to the pure spectrum colors in the color wheel.

The value of a hue is determined by adding white to create a tint, black to create a shade or gray to create a tone.



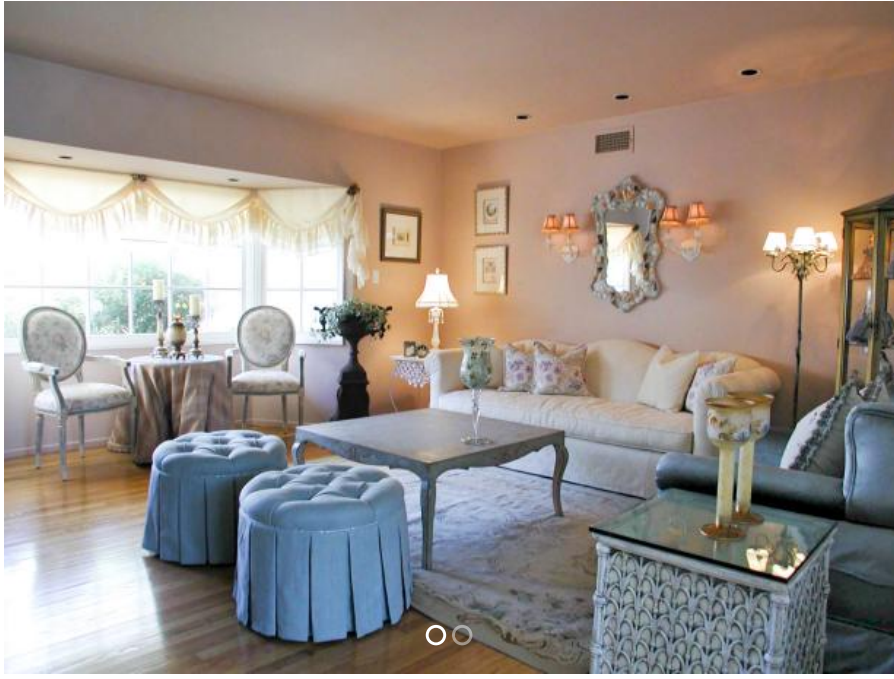
Saturation is the purity of the hue. The colors on the wheel are considered to be in their purest form. As the colors move towards the center, as shown in the graphic at right, they are considered desaturated where no hue dominates.

Natural Reactions to Color

Do you shiver when you're in a light blue space? Fan yourself in a room full of red? Don't worry — there's a scientific reason why. Colors are indelibly tied to natural elements like fire, water, sky, evoking certain responses just as if you were seeing and experiencing it firsthand.

Cool Colors

Cool colors like blue and green do just that — cool and soothe your mind, body and spirit. It's no wonder we flock to the ocean and mountains to rejuvenate our senses. These hues are best used in rooms where you want serenity to prevail.



If cool colors make you feel good, check out these refreshing rooms for decorating inspiration:

Warm Colors

Warm colors like red, orange and yellow give off an energy and intensity unmatched by their cooler cousins. Use these hues in rooms where you anticipate (and want) activity and stimulation, like a kitchen, child's playroom or exercise space.



If warm colors are for you then take a look at these rooms:

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The advertisement features the StereoLand logo at the top, which consists of a blue oval with a white musical note and the text "StereoLand" in a white serif font. Below the logo, the text "Prestige™ Series - Live performance in the comfort of your own home." is centered in a black sans-serif font. The central image shows a complete Paradigm Prestige Series speaker system, including a large center channel speaker, two tall side speakers, two smaller front speakers, and a subwoofer, all in a dark wood-grain finish. At the bottom of the ad, the text "Discover More »" is written in a red italicized font, followed by the "Paradigm" logo in a bold black sans-serif font.



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While you're still deciding where to spend next year's summer vacation, color forecasters have already predicted what color your bathing suit will be for the year.

Kitchen From HGTV Dream Home 2017
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When some people want to lift their spirits, they reach for a bowl of ice cream. There's a better way to improve your mood, though: color. Color is a powerful design tool that can make the rooms in your home feel more calm, cheerful, comfortable or dramatic.

Color makes a tiny room feel larger, or a spacious one feel more intimate, without the time and expense of actually moving walls.

You can make a den feel cozy by painting the walls with a warm color, or make a narrow space feel wider by using different colors on opposing walls. The paint colors you choose, as well as the color of the furniture and accessories, all create a mood.

"Color is all around us and even in our vocabulary. We say we feel 'blue'," says interior designer and color expert Elaine Ryan (<http://elaineryan.com/>). "It's part of our core, but for many years color has been excluded from our homes ... but now I see a real love for it and people wanting it in their home. It's all about finding the colors you respond to and that make you feel good."

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Blue evokes feelings of calm and freshness, and represents strength and dependability. Think of the sky and ocean. The beauty of blue is the elemental color's amazing versatility.

A high-energy shade of blue, like sapphire, can add a bold punch of energy to a room, while a light sky blue on the walls can make a space feel tranquil. Darker shades like navy can offer drama, while paler shades can make small spaces feel larger. The effect depends on the tone of blue.

Since blue is associated with calmness, it works well in a bathroom, bedroom or kitchen, all rooms where one goes to relax. Different shades of light blue can be used for ceilings to mimic the sky, making a room

feel larger.

7 Blue Living Rooms

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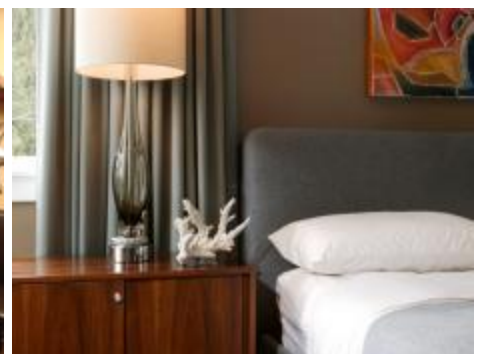
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Stacy Kon is a full-time student of Eastern medicine who is looking to start her own private practice specializing in acupuncture. The former advertising executive, wife and mother of two explains, "Everything I practice nowadays is peace- and tranquility-based, the total opposite of life in the advertising business. Whether it's acupuncture, tuina, qi gong or herbal remedies, helping people feel relaxed and teaching them to live a healthy lifestyle is my focus."

When it came time to remodel her dated, dysfunctional Los Angeles master bathroom, there was only one color she had in mind to ensure the updated space felt both calm and tranquil: blue.

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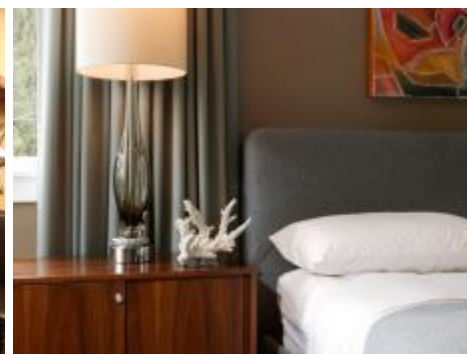
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Behind the Color Blue

Learn how blue interiors can be calming or energizing, depending on the hue's temperature.



Designer, Alia Meyer

By: Jeannie Matteucci

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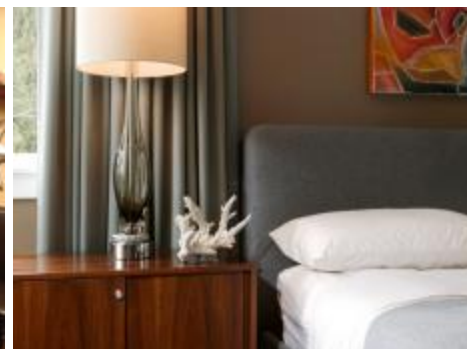
Blue evokes feelings of calm and freshness, and represents strength and dependability. Think of the sky and ocean. The beauty of blue is the elemental color's amazing versatility.



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Blue Master Bath Designed for Tranquility

Aspiring acupuncturist Stacy Kon used calming blue to remodel her inefficient master bathroom.



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Stacy Kon is a full-time student of Eastern medicine who is looking to start her own private practice specializing in acupuncture. The former advertising executive, wife and mother of two explains, "Everything I practice nowadays is peace- and tranquility-based, the total opposite of life in the advertising business. Whether it's acupuncture, tuina, qi gong or herbal remedies, helping people feel relaxed and teaching them to live a healthy lifestyle is my focus."

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hue's temperature.



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Blue evokes feelings of calm and freshness, and represents strength and dependability. Think of the sky and ocean. The beauty of blue is the elemental color's amazing versatility.

A high-energy shade of blue, like sapphire, can add a bold punch of energy to a room, while a light sky blue on the walls can make a space feel tranquil. Darker shades like navy can offer drama, while paler shades can make small spaces feel larger. The effect depends on the tone of blue.

Since blue is associated with calmness, it works well in a bathroom, bedroom or kitchen, all rooms where one goes to relax. Different shades of light blue can be used for ceilings to mimic the sky, making a room feel larger.

7 Blue Living Rooms

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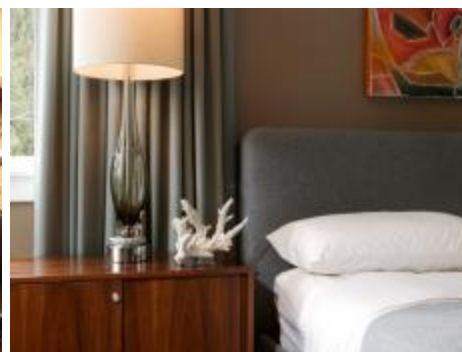
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