

The Power of Color

I know what's going on. That orange paint is calling your name, and that turquoise couch

is just what your family room needs, or so you think. You see, color equals power. It is the ringleader of a room's décor. It creates the mood, impacts the visual size of the room, and says almost everything your houseguests need to know about your personality. In the right hands, color can wrap a room in a masterful blend of warmth and happiness. Put color in the hands of a novice, and you're likely to end up with a decorating nightmare. Before you make any color commitments, consider these tips.

- ☑ **Ease into boldness.** If you have a bold color choice in mind for your room, ignore your urge to start with paint. Start with a pillow, throw, or other accessory. If you love it, shop away for more items. If you hate it, pack up your colorful accessories, and send them off to a friend or donate them to a local thrift store. Believe me, getting rid of unsightly accessories beats trying to rid your walls of the most vibrant shade of red, orange, or neon green.
- ☑ **Sample your idea.** If you're convinced that a bold color choice is right for your walls, try it on a piece of sheet rock large enough to prop up against the wall. Large pieces of sheet rock are available at most retailers where paint is sold. Use small containers of sample paint to make it easier on your wallet. Fabric works the same way. Before purchasing a piece of furniture, place a sample of the fabric in the vicinity where you plan to use it. Be sure to admire the fabric at different times of the day in varying levels of sunlight. Think of this as a bit of extra decorating insurance.
- ☑ **Keep the woodwork simple.** Use the same color on doors, trim, and other woodwork throughout the house. This creates consistency and unity by avoiding abrupt color combinations. Bright white trim works well alongside most colors and gives the room a clean, polished look.
- ☑ **Hide the unwanted.** Is there an unsightly structure that you just can't get rid of? Paint it away by covering it in the same color used on the walls. This causes the structure to blend into the background. Remember, if the wall has a flat finish, the structure should be painted with the same finish.
- ☑ **Stretch the color.** Use lighter and darker shades of the same color in a room. It is pleasing to the eye and offers the opportunity to experience variations of your favorite color. This tactic also creates a smooth transition from one room to the other.
- ☑ **Respect the color wheel.** If one room is visible from the other and you must use a different color in each room, be sure the colors of the two rooms complement one another.

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