How colour affects our mood

Since ancient times, colour has been linked to the way we think and feel. For early humans, the red of fire signalled danger. Later, artists used coloured glass in church windows to represent different feelings, for example, green symbolized hope. In modern times, the colours we use to paint the walls in our houses can affect our mood. So which colours should we use when we are decorating?

Red is an optimistic colour. It's a good colour for a dining room, because it makes people feel sociable. It stimulates conversation and makes you feel hungry. But as it's a strong colour, it can sometimes be a bit too much, and even give people headaches. You could just paint one wall red, or use it for accessories such as lamps and curtains. However, never use red in a baby's bedroom, as it may stop the baby from sleeping. **Pink**, on the other hand, is often used in bedrooms. It's traditionally the colour of love – a pale shade can be peaceful and restful, while a darker shade can suggest passion. Some people think it's a very 'girlie' colour, so adding in areas of dark grey or black to this colour scheme can help make it more generally attractive.

If you want a warm, comforting effect, try **orange**. It's also good for dining rooms, as it's said that it helps you digest your food. However, like red, it's a strong colour and can make a room look smaller, so only use it in a room that gets plenty of light. A colour that's great for smaller spaces, on the other hand, is **yellow**. It's a happy, energetic colour, and is a good colour for a kitchen, as apparently, it discourages insects! It's not very restful though, so it's best not to use it for a bedroom.

 1

Purple is good for rooms where you work, for example, a study or a bedroom, because it's a very creative, stimulating colour. However, it's another colour that can make it difficult for people to relax after a busy day, so if you use it in a bedroom, it's a good idea to combine it with a lighter shade or another colour. **Blue** is also suitable for a study, because it helps you to think and concentrate, as well as being calm and restful. It's a popular colour for bathrooms, and bedrooms too, where a lot of people spend 'thinking time'. Another calming colour is **green**, and it's also good for a bedroom or living room. Green makes people feel relaxed and less stressed, but it can make them lazy, so if you don't want people to go to sleep on the sofa, choose cushions and carpets in a bright colour like red or orange.

For people who prefer neutral colours, **brown** can be a good choice. Although it can be boring, it's a safe, reliable colour in a living room, and you can paint one wall green or blue if you want a bit of extra mental stimulation! Other neutral colours, like white, grey, and beige, are always in fashion. White is the most flexible. It's safe and clean, and you can add any other colours to make the room look brighter. However, **white** isn't great for a bedroom if you want to relax there – a survey showed that people with a white bedroom tended to work in bed at least three times a week. Finally, the most dramatic, and perhaps eccentric, choice of bedroom wall colour is **black**. In fact, it works in any room in moderation, for example, one black wall.

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