The Personality of Color: How Room Color Affects Mood

Develop a Color Scheme Based on Your & Your Colors' Unique Personality
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Though scientists don't completely understand the link between color and mood, it is a scientific fact that color affects mood. And since the colors we choose to live in can definitely affect how we act, think and feel we should certainly consider the personality of color when choosing a room's color scheme.

But what room colors influence what moods? We often talk about being green with envy or feeling blue, but are these colors really indicative of these attitudes? To help you choose room colors that fit your personality, climate and objective, let's explore a little color psychology to discover how room color affects mood.

Tip: The personalities of the colors below are most important when used as a room's dominant color. Keep in mind that various shades of the same color can evoke different moods. For example, red (which is an aggressive color) gives off a completely different vibe than pink (which has been proven to reduce aggressive behavior).

Room Color & Mood: Warm & Cool Colors

When choosing a room's color scheme, remember that balance is best achieved with a mix of warm and cool colors.

Warm Colors

Warm colors, located on one side of the color wheel, are colors with warm undertones such as red-orange, reds, yellows and yellow-greens. These colors are radiant and cozy. Because warm colors seem to advance, they make small rooms appear smaller and large rooms more intimate.

Cool Colors

Cool colors, located opposite warm colors on the color wheel, are colors with cool undertones and include purples, blues and blue-greens. These colors can have a calming effect. In a room, cool colors appear to recede, making a room appear larger. Because these tones can make a room feel colder, these colors work well in a sunny room and may not be as comforting in a room with little natural light.

Neutral Colors

In regards to the technical definition of colors, the neutral colors (or non-colors) are white, gray and black, but in decorating, neutral colors have a wider definition and encompass a large range of colors. In decorating, grays and blacks have both warm and cool undertones and typically fall into one of the two categories above. For more on the personalities of neutral colors, see this article.

Room Color & Mood: Primary Colors

Primary colors can evoke feelings of a bad day at preschool, so when using these colors – either alone or together – don't go overboard. To create a mature ambiance with primary colors, mix with warm tones, like natural fibers and textures.

Blue

Blues can relax, soothe, and calm us. Blue is a popular choice for bedrooms for just this reason. Blues can also improve focus and productivity, so a calming blue might be the right choice for an office or child's study area. Blue is also considered to be a clean color, so it works well in bathrooms and laundry areas. However, dark blues can invoke feelings of sadness, and all blues can appear a little chilly, especially in rooms with little natural light. In these rooms, choose blues with warm or muted tones.

Red

Red is associated with passion and energy, as well as being a bit racy. Red can raise energy levels – it has been shown to increase blood pressure and heart rate – and is known for stimulating appetites and conversation. If you would like to paint your bedroom or living room red, look for muted, rich reds which have a softer and more elegant look.

Yellow

Yellow makes many people feel cheerful, energetic, and happy, yet the color yellow – especially the brighter shades – can cause fatigue and anxiety with overuse. Soft, buttery yellows are easier to live with in the long run. Soft yellows are also easier on the eyes and more calming than bright yellows. Yellow reflects light and is perfect for poorly lit rooms, also making it a great choice for a ceiling color.