

10 DO'S AND DON'TS WHEN CHOOSING PAINT

TEN DO'S & DON'TS WHEN CHOOSING PAINT COLOR



DO create a road map for success.

Just as you would plan your destination for a fun trip, taking the time to create a plan for your color scheme will pay dividends in the end. Start by saving photos of rooms you like, but no need to overthink it. If you like it, save it. Now go back and study the photos for obvious patterns in color and mood. Are the rooms primarily neutral or are you drawn to rooms that make a bold statement? Do you like rooms where all walls are painted the same color or do prefer an accent only? How can you simulate the same in your own space?

If you're having a hard time finding a starting place, look for inspiration from a rug or piece of art. Even a favorite scarf or colorful necklace may lead you to a color scheme you'd enjoy living in.

Once you've selected your colors, think about how you want to integrate them into the space. Even if only using two colors, remember that one should be dominant over the other for proper balance. For example, when using four colors in a scheme, it may be that the fourth color is reduced to just an accent chair or accessory. Will the walls be a neutral backdrop to more colorful furnishings and accessories or do you want to make a bold statement with color on the walls? If taking the color scheme throughout the house, how will it feel as you move through the rooms? Where might you create an element of surprise? Take a chance. It's just paint!

TIP: A color wheel is a wonderful tool for building confidence when developing a color scheme. Just spin the wheel and see where it leads!





DO consider mood and style.

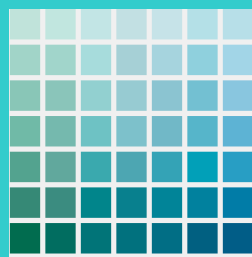
There are many influences that affect our response to color—cultural and personal associations, even how we're feeling about our current life's circumstances and current events taking place. Others who will be occupying the home may even visually see the color differently than you do, especially those with changes in their vision due to aging.

There has been study that suggests colors in their pure and modified forms invoke different psychological effects that may affect our mood. Do you want to create a restful bedroom and luxuriant bath or use color to help bring calm to a chaotic lifestyle? Or create a vibrant and youthful energy? Use the data for color psychology to create the mood and style you're after. Most paint companies offer an online visualizer to apply the colors you're considering to your room photo.

TIP: When building your color scheme, remember that color will become brighter and more intense as they transfer from a small deck fan size sample to a larger sample. Colors we love in the fan deck may actually be difficult to live in and colors we think are dull and uninteresting in the fan deck may actually be the better choice. But remember that even bold colors—such as a deep midnight blue—can be calming despite a high saturation level.



DO identify a color's undertone.



An undertone is the color that alters the purest expression of a hue. For instance, blue as a primary color in its purest form has no undertone. Now add just a slight touch of green. The color is still blue, but its green undertone causes it to play differently with other colors than it did before. Since red is the opposite of green on the color wheel, it will accentuate the green in the blue which may or may not be the effect you're after. As another example, a white with a slight red undertone on

your trim will turn pink if your wall color is green. But a white with a soft yellow undertone will harmonize beautifully.

Undertones are the likely culprit behind the struggle of picking the right paint color. Since they become more pronounced as you move from a small swatch to a larger one, you are setting yourself up for frustration if you don't identify the undertone of not only the paint color you're considering but also that of the finishes that the paint will be used with. Once you get the hang of identifying the undertone, you'll know which direction you need to go when adjusting for a better choice.

TIP: To determine a color's undertone, put the swatch against the purest form of the color, such as a green-blue against a pure blue. If you have a color wheel, you can also confirm the undertone by identifying the opposite color of the perceived undertone and placing the color swatch against that opposite color to accentuate it. This is very helpful when the undertone is very subtle.



DO use large color samples.

You'll want to spend time living with samples of your color considerations before applying them to a wall. As mentioned above, colors change dramatically from a small 1x2 swatch to an entire wall or even just a larger sample. Viewing them in a minimum 8x10 sized sample is strongly recommended. If choosing colors for a home exterior, a poster board size is even better!

TIP: Home improvement stores sell 8x10 peel and stick sheets you can use to create paint samples. And you can purchase small sample cans of the paint from the paint supplier. There are also online services that will send you preprinted paint samples. If making your own, be sure to paint two coats for full coverage and an accurate portrayal of the color. Note that the sheen of sample kits and printed samples will not be representative of the actual sheen of your paint. Custom samples can be requested.



DO consider your lighting.

Your lighting will affect how colors are perceived in the room. And you'll find that each wall will reflect the same color differently, the darkest being your window wall. If you want all the walls to look the same, you'll have to use different colors!

Artificial lighting will cast either a warm yellow or cool blue tone onto the color depending upon the color temperature of the bulb. Remember this when viewing the samples in the paint store and try to take them into natural light (but not bright sunlight as it will bleach the color's intensity). At home, review your color samples in the lighting that is typical for the way you live, e.g., lights typically off or on, window coverings up or down, etc. Also, be sure to look at your samples in all of the rooms the colors will be used in as varying sun exposures will affect how the color looks.

TIP: Look at your color samples during different times of day and lighting and even in different weather, if possible. Walk away and come back to them with fresh eyes. You'll be amazed.



DON'T paint without first sampling.

Even seasoned designers sample first. A color that was fabulous in one client's home can read differently in your home due to different sun orientation, finishes, and personality. Take your time with the process. This is where the measure twice, cut once rule applies for a better outcome.

Always view samples on the plane they will be viewed, i.e., vertical for walls, ceiling on ceiling, etc., and at a distance that is typical of how they will be viewed.

TIP: Once you've selected your colors, file the paint samples away to use when shopping for furnishings and other finishes. It also helps to create a paint guide outlining which brand and colors were used throughout the home.



DON'T view too many samples at once.

This only leads to overwhelm. Pull as many of the store's color chips as you want, but try to take no more than five of any hue home. View the samples individually, not side by side, to determine if you like the color or not. Color affects color, i.e., the undertone of each color will be exaggerated in comparison to the color next to it. By looking at the color individually you allow it to stand on its own without the influence of the other colors. Additionally, your existing wall color will affect how you perceive the color. Depending upon the wall color, you may want to mount the sample to a white poster board or other white background for viewing.



Once you've had a chance to study your color chips in various locations as discussed above, reduce the group to no more than two final contenders, three if you must. If they seem workable, go to larger samples. If they're not working, identify why and go back for new samples with a specific direction you think will accomplish your objective using the skills you've been developing with identifying undertones.

TIP: It's common for painters to paint samples on an exterior of a home side by side. Ask the painter to please spread them out from one another so that you can see the color for what it really is.



DON'T try to match colors exactly.

Even if you match that gorgeous violet in your rug perfectly, the color will look different once on the wall. And as stated above, it will be a different color on every wall because of light and shadow. Instead, explore similar colors that will blend and make the room more interesting.

TIP: When working with a monochromatic color scheme, explore the adjacent pages and their slightly varied undertones for alternative colors to your main one. It adds a complexity to the scheme that is much more intriguing than selecting from the same page of the fan deck.



DON'T get too hung up on trends.

It's likely you've decided to paint because you're tired of the colors you've been living with for ten or more years. Or maybe you're bringing finishes up to date and paint needs to follow suit. Consider current trends so that you can maintain maximum value for your home, but understand that today's hottest trends will be well on their way to "dated" in about ten to twelve years. This is your life, your house, and your money, so go for what will ultimately make you happy. If that means using an achromatic color scheme when color is all the rage, go achromatic. If you love bold color but neutrals are all the rage, go for color. Be a trendsetter to the extent you care about being 'on trend' and create a home that expresses *you*.



DON'T forget to have fun.

This is your chance to make your life more beautiful by making your home more beautiful. Take your time, enjoy the process, and don't overthink it. If it isn't fun and you're growing increasingly frustrated, find professional help. You'll be so glad you did.