

How to Choose Colors



Begin at the Beginning

Determine what features or existing finishes in the room you would consider permanent. Consider the cabinets, tile or a brick fireplace. For example, if the wood of your kitchen cabinets has a red undertone, make sure the paint color you choose works well with that hue.

Create a Focal Point

Emphasize your home's attractive architectural features, such as crown molding or arched window treatments, with contrasting paint — lighter or darker than the wall — or by painting them with a glossy finish. You can also make one wall an accent wall by painting it a different color, giving it a faux finish, adding wallpaper or a border.

Unify the Color Flow

You can unify rooms by using a common color palette. Create distinct spaces by altering the shade and hue within the common palette.

Emphasize or Minimize

Color can emphasize certain features - and minimize others. A long narrow room will look wider if you use a slightly darker color on the shorter walls and a lighter color on the longer walls. You can make a ceiling appear higher by applying a lighter color, or lower with a darker color. To give a big room a more intimate feel, paint the walls in colors that advance toward you, such as red, gold, orange and brown. To help a small room seem larger, paint the walls in colors that make them appear to recede, such as blue, green or violet.

Reflect on Light Sources

Remember that the color you choose may look different at various times of the day and night. The warm tones of incandescent lights will have a different influence on the color than the natural light of day. Once you're aware of how different light sources can affect your color choices, you can change your room's "mood" to match the pace of your day.