



Updating a Color Scheme

*When adding or changing a color in your home, consider the total effect.
How does this change affect the “old” colors in the room?*

Colors are being used today in freer and more exciting combinations than ever before. Bringing a new color or colors into your present color scheme can present some challenges, however. To help make all colors seem to belong together, here are some considerations.

Develop a Color Awareness

Each January and February some home shelter magazines publish examples of the current or “in” colors for home furnishings and interiors. All hues and neutral colors are usually represented. While looking through these publications, remember that the important thing is not what specific colors are being emphasized, but look instead at the common qualities of these colors.

- ⇒ Are the colors grayed or bright?
- ⇒ Are the overall values light (pastel) or dark?
- ⇒ Are the color combinations clear and sharp or are the colors subtle and muted?
- ⇒ Do neutrals seem to predominate or are they used as a relief from many colors?
- ⇒ What are the overall feelings projected by the colors and color combinations shown?

If you are able to distinguish the subtle differences, you will have an advantage as a “color consumer.” If you don’t, you can learn to develop this kind of sensitivity through observations and experience. Why is it important to develop this sensitivity? Because your decisions about color most often involve selecting something to coordinate with what you already have. Distinguishing between subtle differences in color will help you select colors that enhance rather than distract from each other.

Ideas for Decorating Around Subdued Colors

When your present furnishings seem a little faded or grayed, there are several ways of decorating “around” them – or brightening them and making them seem fresher.

- If you like the existing color of the furniture, repeat the same color(s) nearby or on a wall or floor – or all three. The color(s) selected should be slightly more grayed (lower intensity) than the older piece of furniture. This will lead to a more subdued color scheme and blend the worn or faded colors on the furniture with the new additions. The new color will not seem to shout “new” and stand apart. Use at least one other color in the room for contrast.

- ❑ You may wish to select a grayed complementary color (complementary colors are the colors opposite each other on the color wheel, such as red and green). For example, burgundy or grayed rose pillows could be placed on a faded green couch for contrast. Another example would be using deep rust or tan pillows on a faded or grayed blue couch. It is best to avoid using bright, intense colors immediately next to or against faded or dulled colors. However, complementary colors of the same intensity will contrast with and emphasize each color. These accents should be repeated in small amounts elsewhere in the room (picture, small accessories, etc.).
- ❑ An older upholstered piece of furniture can be blended into a color scheme by placing the piece in front of a soft gray wall or on a gray rug. Gray will seem to brighten the faded colors, especially if the gray has a touch of the fabric color in it. New colors can then be added in accessories or fabric furnishings.

Ideas for Decorating Around Bright Colors

Bright, high intensity colors appear to brighten and emphasize each other. Bold contrasts can be striking! When using bright colors, keep these ideas in mind.

- ❑ If existing colors are bright in intensity, new colors added to a room also should be bright and the intensities similar. White can always be added as background for intense colors to prevent an overpowering color build-up.
- ❑ A room full of vivid or pastel colors can be unified by the use of lots of white. White contrasts pleasantly with black and goes well with chrome, rosewood and modern designs. True white, however, is not always a good choice for wall color. Pure white may reflect flaws in fabrics and the finishes of furniture. Antiques rarely look well against stark white.
- ❑ Bold contrasts break up space and create visual movement in a room. They also call attention to areas of color contrast. Examples include white woodwork against a dark blue wall or red and white floral draperies against a green wall. Use care with contrasts. When vivid contrasts are used in small rooms, a crowded or cluttered effect may be created.

Use Color With Confidence

Patience in shopping pays off with colors and fabrics that are pleasing and long wearing. If you must replace an item of furniture or repaint a room, it is worth trying to find perfect matches for the existing color scheme, since rooms can seldom be completely redecorated.

Remember to choose colors you will enjoy. Use your initiative and your own ideas. Keeping well informed on what's new on the market opens up new vistas for you and helps to give you ideas for working with and using color. Let the colors you select express your own personality and life style. Remember...these colors help set a mood and create a comfortable home for your family.

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