

Painting How-To #5:

Select the Right Colors for Your Home.



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What are the best colors for my home's exterior?

The exterior color of a house is a key component of its attractiveness. The color of your home can create a lasting first impression on anyone who sees it. For this reason you should think carefully before painting the outside of your home. Following a few simple guidelines can help you select the proper color scheme for your house. This not only can add to your home's attractiveness, but it also might increase its resale value.

- #1. Walk around your neighborhood, and examine the exterior color of the homes. Select colors for your home that blend in with the houses of your neighbors. Take note of any attractive color schemes.
- #2. Keep in mind you need to select colors for three parts of your home's exterior: the main body, the trim and the accents.
- #3. Choose a color for the main body of the house that blends with the roof shingles. Remember that light color schemes make a house look larger and dark color schemes make a house look smaller.
- #4. Select a color for the trim such as the soffits and window casings. Choose a color that contrasts with the main body color if you want to highlight the trim, and use the main body color if you want to deemphasize the trim. For a compromise

between highlighting and deemphasizing, select a different shade of the main body color.

- #5. Select a color for the accents such as entry doors. You can choose a color that contrasts with the main body color or complements it.
- #6. Go to the paint store, and purchase small samples of the various colors you have selected. Test the paint colors on small sections of the house. Determine if these colors are your final choices.

How do I pick colors that go together?

I'll admit it, I have chosen some wrong colors in the past. I have a regular customer of mine who gave me the green light to pick the best color to use that matches everything and being neutral as well. Being from Arizona originally, I have come to love the "Southwest" color combinations which differs from the more traditional colors that are being used in the "Midwest". So I picked a color and painted the whole house for him. To say the least, he was not too happy with my choice.

Time after time, I have fallen in love with "the perfect color" on a paint chip, only to be stunned by the

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results on the wall. And even when I try those test quarts, I'll like it enough on one wall to go back and buy a gallon, only to realize I really hate it when it's everywhere. As a result of all this trial and error, I have a "paint graveyard" in my garage where all of the unused gallons go.

Color is fickle and changes depending on your light. A wall color that looks great in your friend's house could flop in yours. Don't go from just the paint chip, which is actually ink, not paint.

When you decide on a general color, say a robin's egg blue, or a marigold, get several quarts to test. Some companies, including Ralph Lauren, sell little test bags of color, which are cheaper than quarts.

Paints with low levels of VOCs (volatile organic compounds) are environmentally friendlier than traditional paints and don't cost much more. Although they sometimes go on a little runnier, they won't give you a headache from fumes. Consider using exterior paints inside. Their pigments are often more intense.

Test the paint in the room where it will go. Use two coats. Ideally, test the paint on 16" x 16" pieces of drywall that are the same texture as your walls. You can get these for just a few dollars at your local home improvement store (sometimes free). This is better than test patches on your walls because they can ghost through the final paint color and haunt you for years to go. Using panels lets you move the colors around so you can see them in different lights and on different walls. Panels also let you place carpet candidates near the panels to see how they go together.

Before deciding, observe the colors at different times of day.

How do I pick colors to go with my home furnishings?

Let's talk interiors! Here are 5 easy steps to picking the perfect color palette for your home. Yep, having a designer color scheme throughout your home is easier than you think!

One question that I get A LOT is "How do I pick colors for my home!" There are a few ways to narrow the color choices in your home. Go to your closet. Yeah, the closet where all your clothes are hanging out. Take a good look at what you have in there.

Now ask yourself -

- What are the colors I gravitate toward?
- What are the colors I love to be in?
- Are they there because they make me happy?
- Do I often seem to buy _____ colored shirts?

What ever it is take a clue from here. If you love the color why not use it in your room?

Now that you know what color groups you tend to like, lets take a trip to the fabric store... Yeah, not the paint store, not yet, let's go to the fabric store. One of the best color choosing advice I have ever heard...find a piece of fabric THAT YOU LOVE preferably one with several colors that work together well, and use this as your color scheme.

P.S. BE SURE TO BUY A FEW YARDS! This fabric that is the whole foundation of your home, buy some and use it throughout, as pillows, as art, dinner napkins, a teddy bear... whatever!

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One of the pluses to choosing your color this way, is that you can see very clearly how the colors interact. And bonus- if the fabric is in a line you can buy coordinating fabrics for your home very easily!

As a warning, be aware of choosing really seasonal colors! Sometimes while shopping for colors you will get caught up in a particular season. For example, if it is almost fall and you are loving fall colors. Be aware, that if you do all fallish colors in your home you may be sick of them in the spring!... unless you followed step numero uno and that is where it led you!

I should mention here that it doesn't have to be fabric. It could be a special painting, a photograph, a rug, whatever speaks to you! Like this new rug I have in my living room.

One of the best tips I learned for getting a house color scheme to work together is picking about 5 colors total for the home. So, lets count it out on our fingers... yes I still count with my fingers.

1. A white (or black...if you are daring) This white will be the color of ALL your, well white surfaces be it Moldings doors ceilings etc.

The nice part about this is that when you need to touch something up there will never be the... ugh, what color was that... moments.

2. A neutral – be it tan, grey or even a blue. Whatever color it is, it must be able to act as your neutral. This color should be a simple color that will be the neutral in your home it is an easy way to bring everything together and a simple choice when you are not sure... for example a hall, or a ceiling. This neutral

might be the best color for your sofa too... (if you are doing a tan, one personal suggestion, unless you plan on adding a lot of yellow-which is fine but not everyone's thing, stick to a grey based tan and you will be happier, otherwise your neutral just might end up being more of a color than a, well, neutral!)

3. Color of your choice (use your swatch as a guide for these three choices)

4. Another coordinating color of your choice

5. Yet another coordinating color of your choice.

Use these colors to pull the look together! From step one, you know what colors you love, from step two you have found the colors that work perfectly together and finally step three you have narrowed down your major colors. NOW THE FUN BEGINS.

Go collect as many paint chips as you can! Take them to your home, look at them with your fabric, at different times of day in different lights and rooms. Narrow down the paint colors you love.

Where do I put these colors? Another SCARY question! If you want your home to flow naturally from room to room, this is where all the steps we've taken will make this process a lot easier. Let me explain by taking you virtually through a few rooms:

Ding Dong!(that is the doorbell in case you are wondering, I wasn't calling you names!) Welcome to my home! When you enter the foyer, you will notice I have white trim and moldings... neutral walls and sea salt ceiling, There is also a fun display of bright red framed art.

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I invite you to come in and you walk from the foyer into the living room, that has sea salt walls, white trim and ceiling, on the neutral couch there are such fun pillows in pops of red, and another that was from my starting fabric on a pillow... gee it looks like that fabric was MADE FOR THIS ROOM!!!

You walk into our dining room (hopefully you are lucky and I've made creme brulee!) But the dining room is far more dramatic with white walls a red lacquered dining table, and sea salt place settings and mostly white furnishings with pops of sea blue throughout.

Okay, maybe a red lacquered table might scare you some. You take the colors you have chosen and switch them up with each room, but you have hints of them through out the entire house- the bathrooms, halls, living rooms, kitchens. Then as you enter each room, you don't think, "Wait, am I on another planet?" Instead each room flows into the next, your eye is able to enjoy the transition. It doesn't mean that you can't be bold with color, but that you bring a hint of what was in the last room in.

And if that still doesn't do it for you I have a great designer that I like to refer, **Renae Kranz, owner of Set A Scene Home Staging and Interior Design.**

Can you match existing colors?

The bad news: You cannot get a perfect match on paint color if you are trying to touch up wall paint with new paint.

The good news: You can get very close and there's tricks to make it look great. Computerized paint color

matching has made it much easier for paint stores to match almost any shade of paint.

- #1. Whether you are painting over repair or just "touching up" over grimy or worn areas, the best solution is to get the paint color as close as you can, then paint the entire wall from corner to corner.
- #2. If there is something you can take off the wall to have the color matched at the paint store, this is the best solution. A heat register or painted switch plate cover, perhaps.
- #3. If there's nothing you can take off the wall, get as many paint swatches as possible and hold them up to get the closest match. Do this in natural light, if possible.
- #4. Say the wall you're trying to touch up is really high and it's not practical to paint the entire thing. Use a roller instead of a brush to apply the paint, it will blend in better. Realize it will be impossible to do a perfectly seamless match, but if you get close enough most people won't notice.