

Choosing Paint Colors For A Bedroom

Elements of Style Interiors - Jessica Dauray

As interior designers, we walk into a room and have an immediate feeling about what color it should be. Part of that is natural instinct, and part of it comes from years and years of practice. But if design is not your profession, the choice can be tough. It's difficult to know how the color will look on the walls, and there's always that fear that you'll end up disappointed.

In the bedroom, paint color is particularly important. Bedrooms are supposed to promote rest and relaxation, and colors around us have a lot to do with our mood. We've all heard that bright reds and yellows energize us, while cool greens and blues are soothing. In this guide, we'll share everything you need to know to pick the perfect bedroom paint color -- from how color affects mood to how to introduce bold colors without regretting the choice later.

How Paint Colors Affect the Mood of a Bedroom

The first thing to think about in setting the mood is the color temperature. Warm colors tend to promote activity and excitement, while cool colors are more relaxing and calming. However, that doesn't mean you always have to stick to cool colors, particularly if they're not your favorite. If you opt for a warmer color, you might just want to choose a more subtle shade, which can also be relaxing. Here, we explore the moods that can be set with various colors, shades and color combinations.

- **Tranquil colors** - If relaxation is your goal, consider light grays, blue-grays, soft greens and blues, or neutrals. With the right decor, these colors all have a soothing and calming effect.
- **Romantic colors** - Dark shades like navy, olive, deep gray or deep violet create a romantic vibe. The key is not to overwhelm the room with a shade that is too dark, particularly if the room is small.
- **Happy colors** - If you do want a dose of energy in the room, try a soft yellow or pink that is warm but not overwhelming. Warmer colors are also great for rooms with little natural light. Color combinations like a pale Tiffany blue, champagne and white can also create a happy vibe.
- **Neutrals** - An all-white bedroom can be stunning, but there are so many other neutrals that are much softer and calming. Pale grays, champagnes, warm creams and light tans are soothing but add interest and depth.
- **Spa colors** - It's almost impossible not to feel relaxed at the spa. The color palette has something to do with that. Spa-inspired colors range from warm neutrals to watery blues and greens.

- Classic contrasting colors - Opposing colors balance each other out, creating a look that is warm and inviting. Think yellow and navy blue or cool turquoise with warm orange. Again, the key here is not to overdo and overwhelm the room with dark, bold colors.

Tips for Choosing the Perfect Paint Color

Most designers agree on some general principles for how to go about picking a bedroom paint color. There are no hard and fast rules that apply to everyone, of course, but applying some basic guidelines can help ensure that you'll be happy with the paint color for many years to come.

-Be current, but not too trendy. You want the color to be modern, but going too trendy is risky because trends change quickly. If you're sick of the color in a year, you'll have to go through the time and hassle of repainting.

-Use bold colors sparingly. If you love a bold color like turquoise or burnt orange, consider using it as an accent, rather than the color for all four walls. Paint just one wall a bright color - behind the headboard, for example - or introduce the color in pops by painting the back of built-in shelves. Another option is just to keep the paint neutral and introduce color in accessories like throw pillows and bedding, which are easier to change.

-Consider more muted shades. If your favorite color is something bright and bold like red or yellow, there's no rule that says you can't have that on the bedroom walls. Just consider going for a more muted shade, like a soft red or pale yellow. As we've said, bedrooms are supposed to be places of relaxation, and bold shades promote energy, not a calming environment.

-Always try the paint color first. Tempting as it may be, never spring for a can of paint before you have tested it on the wall. Grab a few samples and test them in an inconspicuous spot. No matter how great the paint color looks in the store, it will always look different on your walls. Factors like the size of the room and lighting also impact how the paint color will look.

-Consider the whole home. When you pick a paint color for the bedroom, you need to think about the home as a whole. Does the color compliment the colors in other rooms? How does the color flow from one room to the next? Walking from a blue room to a red one, for example, can be jarring.

-Pick your paint color last. Most people start with the paint color and build their decor around that. But, in many cases, it's easier and more effective to pick the paint color last, after the fabrics and accessories have been chosen. When you pick the paint color first, you limit fabric and accessories choices.

-Hire an interior designer. If you're at a loss for what paint color or colors to choose, consider hiring an interior designer as a consultant. Many designers are happy to provide a few hours of consulting, even if you don't hire them to decorate the entire bedroom. A professional opinion can prevent you from making decisions you'll regret later.

-Be true to your own style. Always remember that design should be a reflection of you. If you choose a color simply because someone else suggests it or because it seems practical, you might find yourself unhappy with it. Pay attention to the "rules" but not at the expense of expressing yourself.

How Lighting Affects Paint Colors

Lighting has a huge impact on the way a paint color looks in a room. Consider both the natural and artificial lighting when you're choosing a paint color. When you try samples, make note of how they look at different times of day. If you can, choose the lighting in the room before the paint color so you have an accurate picture of how the color will look when the room is finished.

In general, softer and more natural light showcases paint colors best. However, there are also tricks you can use to change the way a color looks if it appears too bold or too muted. Bulbs with a temperature rating of around 2,700 on the Kelvin scale can warm up the room, while bulbs with a temperate around 4,000 Kelvin cool down a room. Always keep in mind that the most attractive lighting comes in layers - by mixing overhead lighting with lamps, picture lights, chandeliers and more. Layering can be difficult to master, so consider consulting an interior designer if you're at a loss for where to start.

To see an example of the bedrooms designed by Jessica and the staff at Elements of Style Interiors.

