

Introduction

Disclaimer

There are many ways in which colour can have a psychological effect on us. However, I am only covering a few points for each colour. Colour psychology is highly subjective and affects each individual person in a different way. I am not speaking for everyone when I explain some of these concepts.

Brightness and Saturation

One of the most important things to note about colour is brightness and saturation. Saturation is how pure a light is. A less-saturated colour is more grey; for example, khaki-green is less-saturated than kelly green. On the other hand, brightness is how light a colour appears. Colours that are less-saturated but bright are relaxing on the eye; for example, bright sage green is considered calm. In contrast, colours that are highly-saturated but less-light are energizing; sapphire blue, for example, is a high-energy colour.

Chromotherapy

To summarize, chromotherapy is the use of colours to heal or cure. Although this treatment is outdated, it is still used today as an alternative to other forms of therapy.

Ecological Valence Theory

A lot of feeling about colour relates back to our own experiences or culture. These feelings are deeply personal and can vary between different people. The ecological valence theory assumes that an individual's preferences of a colour are greatly determined by their experiences and situations associated with that colour. This theory also includes ideas about favourite colours, assuming that an individual's preference of a colour is determined by their preference of correspondingly coloured objects. For instance, someone who likes cherries or red roses may consider

red to be a nice colour, whereas someone who dislikes oranges may not be fond of the colour orange.

Marketing

Colour is also a big factor in marketing. It is considered a valuable messaging tool. Colour can make you feel a certain way about a company instantly. People decide whether or not they like a person, environment, or product in less than 90 seconds, and 90% of that decision is based off of the colour of the product or packaging. In this way, branding must place a large focus on colour and how it relates to their target market. The goal for marketers is to trigger a specific feeling or emotion to gain a positive response.

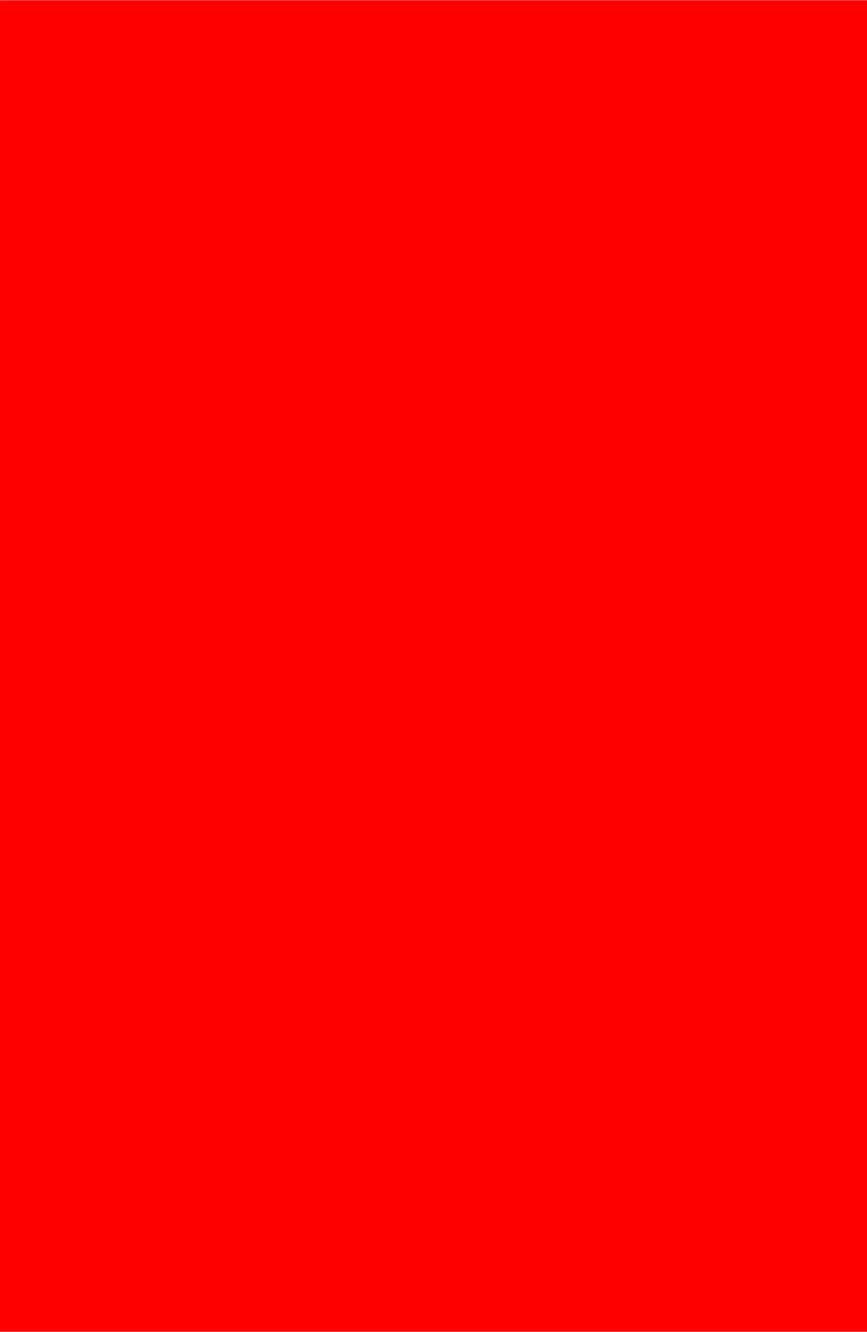
Warm Colours and Cool Colours

Colours in the red area are considered warm colours. This includes reds, oranges, and yellows. These colours can evoke feelings ranging from warmth and comfort to anger and hostility. Cool colours, on the other hand, are a part of the blue area. This includes blues, greens, and purples. Cool colours can usually cause feelings of calmness and relaxation or sadness and indifference.

Studies have shown that rooms painted in warm colours cause people inside to feel warmer, while cool-coloured rooms cause feelings of cold.

Other studies have reported that warm-coloured placebo pills were more successful than cool-coloured ones.

Interior designers must also consider where to place both warm and cool colours. We are drawn to warm colours, so these might be good colours to place at the end of a long hallway. As well, warm colours tend to make rooms feel smaller and walls closer together, whereas cool colours stretch a room out and cause the illusion that it's bigger.



Red is quite a passionate colour. It signifies action, adventure, aggression, anger, rebellion, and courage. Red has been linked with reactions of greater speed and force, which may make it useful to athletes before exercising. However, seeing red before a test or exam has been proven to hurt performance. In one study, 71 college students were exposed to either a red, green, or black card prior to a 5-minute test. Individuals that had been exposed to the red cards had an overall score that was 20% less than the other groups.

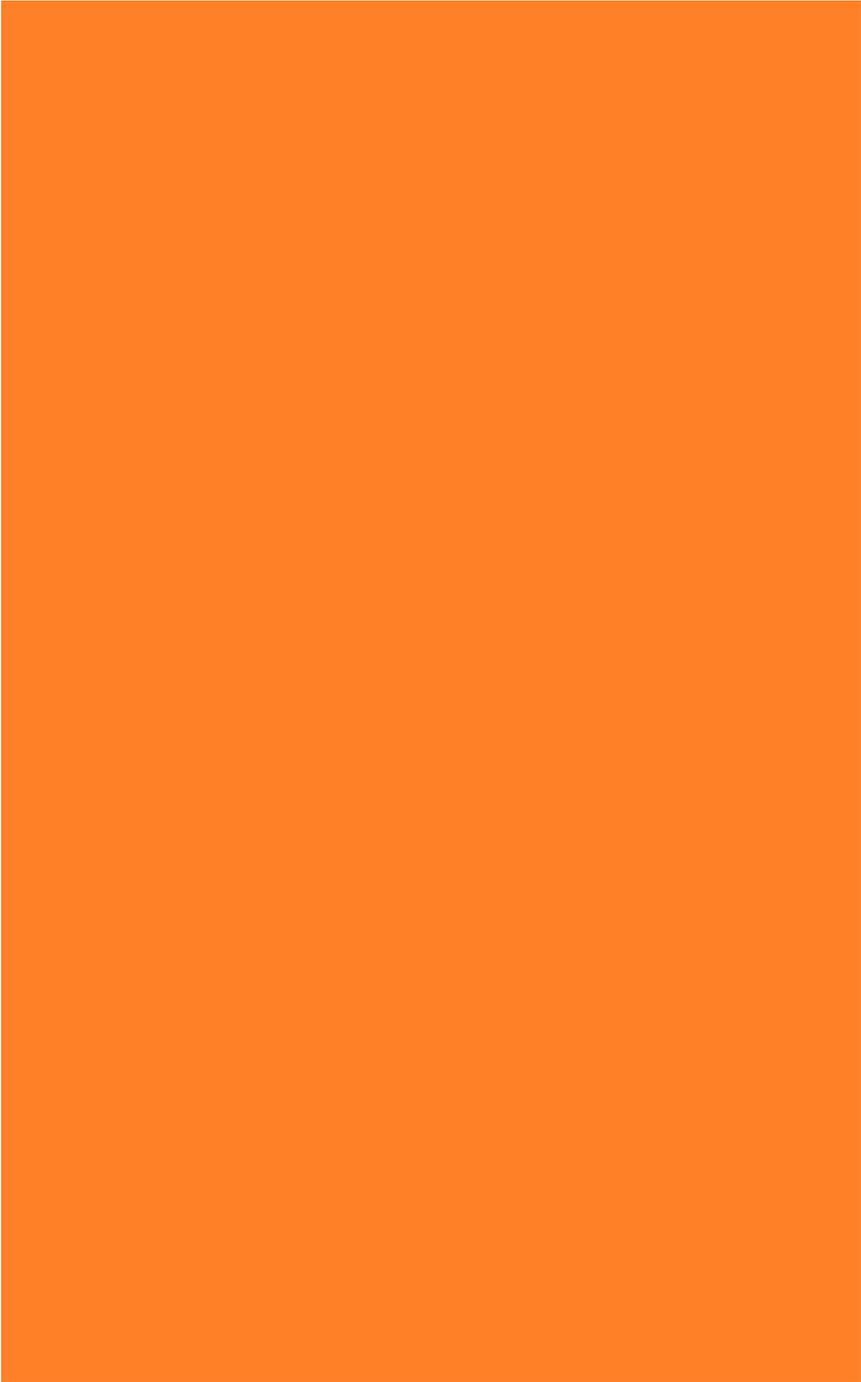
Colours can say something about how we want to be perceived by others. It is said that red is a good colour for a female to wear on a date as it is seen as very attractive and passionate.

Red is also quite an interesting colour when it comes to marketing. Red and orange are known to strengthen feelings of hunger, so these colours are used highly in branding for food companies. For example, McDonald's is known for its bright red colour all over the brand. This is part of the reason why you might suddenly feel hungry when driving by a restaurant or seeing a food commercial. However, if you are striving for weight loss, a red dining room or kitchen may not be helpful.

A great number of casinos also use red as it has a psychological effect that makes us more willing to gamble. Las Vegas is covered in red for this exact reason.

In chromotherapy, red is used to stimulate the body and mind and to increase circulation.

Note that while red signifies some very specific objects or emotions, individual reactions to the colour are widely varied. Some individuals say that red creates a deep feeling of excitement for them, while others appreciate it as a colour that boosts confidence. Sometimes people view red as *too* bold and overwhelming. Try remembering to think about your personal reaction to red, or any other colour, so you can use some of that information to your advantage.



“Orange is very blatant and vulgar. It makes you immediately start having feelings.” — Wolf Kahn

Just like red, **orange** is an attention-grabbing, vibrant colour. It is normally viewed as bright, cheery, and uplifting. However, like any colour, a highly saturated version of orange may be overwhelming and harsh. As you will read about purple, orange is a controversial colour; people will either love it or hate it.

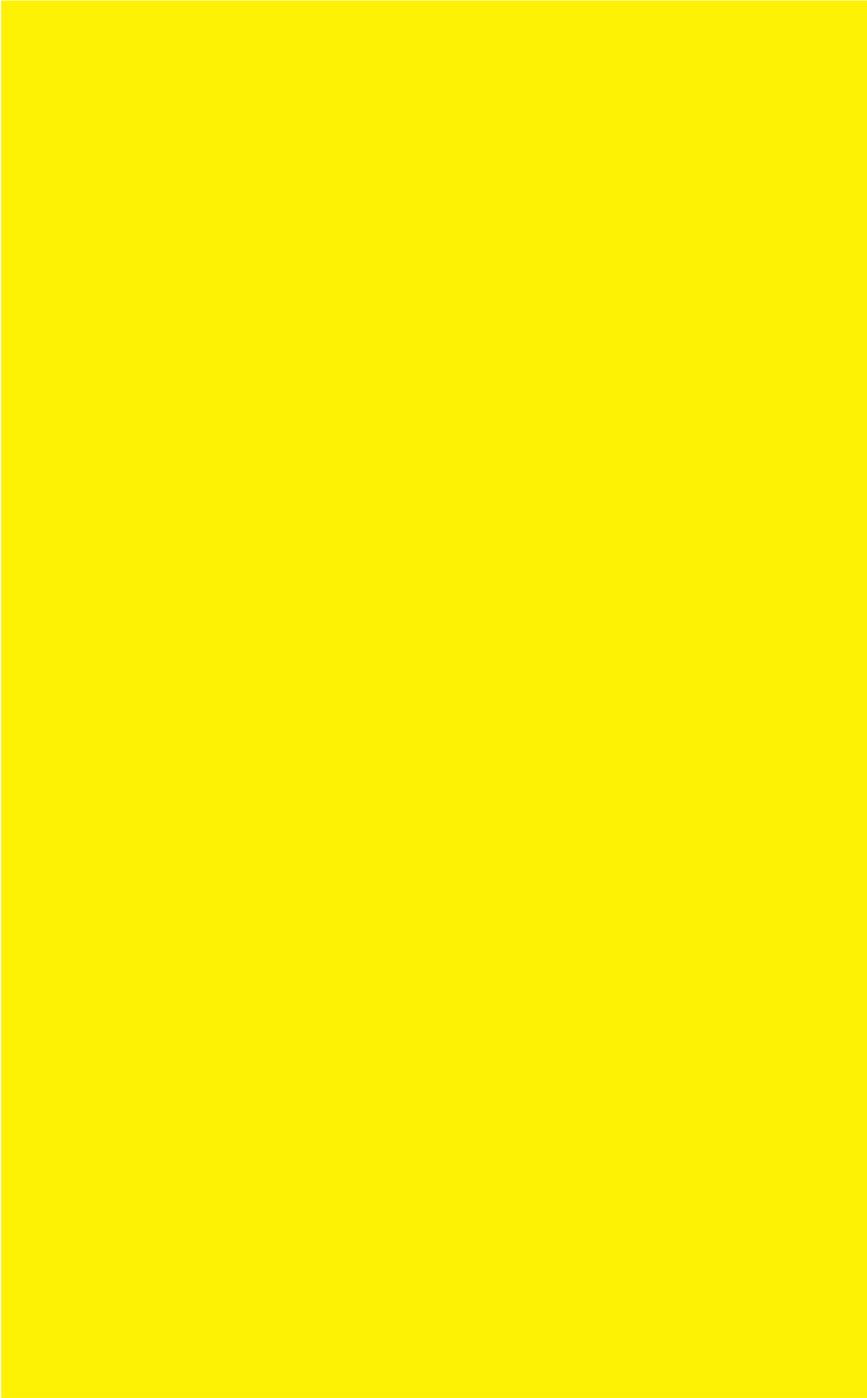
Orange is often used in marketing to attract the eyes of consumers with its vibrance. It also represents value and discounts in the business world. Exactly like red, orange stimulates your appetite and is therefore used in food commercials or branding for restaurants. A hotdog stand in New York decided to begin incorporating orange into their business, and their sales immediately increased by 7%.

Orange increases the oxygen supply to the brain and represents enthusiasm, so it is a good colour to wear when working out.

In chromotherapy, orange is used to increase energy levels and to heal the lungs.

Certain, more earthy, shades of orange are linked with autumn as well, creating a different sort of aesthetic for the mind to latch onto orange with.

Someone who wears orange will most likely be perceived as a very outgoing, energetic individual.



On the positive side, **yellow** stands for energy, optimism, cheeriness and fun. A splash of yellow in a room or in an outfit can go a long way. When people think of yellow in nature, they think of the sun. The colour can instantly brighten a person's mood.

However, despite the positive effects yellow can have, its high-energy can also be negative. Many people find too much yellow overwhelming and frustrating; it is not a calming colour. Additionally, because of the amount of light that is reflected off of yellow, the colour can be seriously straining to the eyes and can make it difficult to read. Yellow would not be a good colour for a desktop background or workspace.

The colour yellow is also not recommended for a significant article of clothing in an outfit when going to work. It can either make a situation more stressful, or, especially a less-saturated shade, can make a person appear weak.

Splashes of yellow are great to accent another more stable colour, but stay away from too much yellow around professional environments or environments that are meant to be relaxing.



Green is heavily referred to as the colour of nature; it appears so much throughout the natural world. Green symbolizes freshness, revitalization, peacefulness, and relaxation.

Many businesses focussing on health and wellness will incorporate green into their branding to show that they are new and fresh.

Green would be a good colour to paint a yoga studio or cafe to create a relaxed, healthy environment.

It has been scientifically proven that green is the easiest colour on our eyes. Because the eye focuses green directly on the retina, the eye muscles are not as strained. People who sit in front of a screen all day for work may find it helpful to use a green desktop. This can significantly affect productivity and efficiency.

Green can affect us physically as well. A green workplace was reported to have less absences from work due to illnesses. In one case, a group of warehouse workers complained about black boxes being too heavy. However, when the same contents were changed to green boxes, the complaints ceased. The green boxes somehow gave the illusion that they were lighter.

Lastly, green is capable of improving reading ability. It is recommended to some people that if they lay a transparent green sheet over books and papers, the speed and comprehension of the reading will strengthen.



Blue is considered part of the area of cool colours. It is quite easily the most popular colour in the world. We link blue with significant monuments in nature like the ocean and the sky. Blue can signify any range of positive and negative traits. The colour represents security, trust, wisdom, loyalty, productivity, and calmness of mind. The colour is used in chromotherapy to soothe illness and treat pain. However, being a cool colour, blue can also signify sadness, iciness, and distance.

Unlike red and orange, blue is thought to suppress hunger. This may be because blue is so rarely found naturally on food. For this reason, many people choose to paint their dining rooms blue as a weight-loss strategy. Blue is also suggested for rooms that you spend a lot of time in, like a bedroom, as it evokes a calm, serene feeling. For high-traffic rooms, blue is a good choice as well because it has been shown to decrease respiration, lower blood pressure, and relieve tension.

A study explained that people sitting in a room painted blue complained that it was too cold. However, after the room was painted peach, a warm colour, the complaints stopped, revealing that blue can have a physical effect on us as well.

Lastly, blue is recommended for men on a first date. It gives both people a sense of stability and has the ability to calm any nerves.



Purple is often described as a very mysterious, spiritual, and imaginative colour. It is also viewed as rare and intriguing since purple is lacking in nature. For this reason, purple is often a sign of wealth and royalty. In ancient times, it was difficult to create purple dyes for fabric as it was so naturally rare. Only people with a lot of money could afford to buy anything purple. It was actually illegal in the Elizabethan era to wear purple if you weren't considered wealthy. As well, because of the exoticism of the colour, it is most likely that an individual will either love purple or hate purple.

Marketers can use purple to their advantage if they want to convey that a product is expensive or good quality. For example, Cadbury uses purple packaging to lead consumers to believe that their chocolate is of better quality and therefore more delicious.

Purple is also considered a good colour for stimulating creative thinking. This might be a good colour to paint an office or art studio.

Light purple, however, can make for a peaceful, relaxing surrounding. It can relieve tension or stress, which may make it a good colour to paint a spa or a yoga studio.