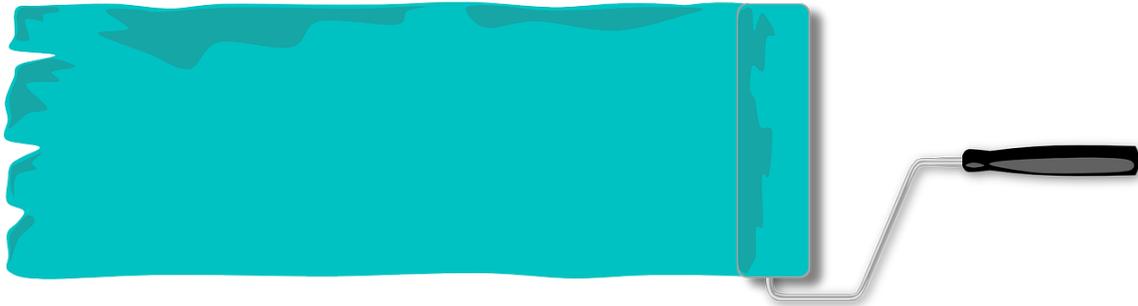


Create a colorful room that sets just the right tone

Your new apartment at The Loomis Communities is a blank canvas where you can begin to paint your retirement life. But what colors should you choose?

You love blue, so you select a soft azure for your living room. You find it soothing, but your husband avoids the room. He says it makes him feel slightly depressed. And yet, he chooses a dark, rich navy for the walls of his office—a room in which he feels confident and productive.



There isn't much scientific research about how and why color affects your mood, but researchers have found links between color and behavior. So it pays to put some thought into the colors you select.

We do know that feelings about color are highly personal and often depend on past relationships. So if you spent a lot of time in your favorite aunt's yellow kitchen, that color probably makes you feel happy and energized.

Folks over 65 may experience changes in vision that affect their perception of colors. That blue you chose for the living room might look darker to you than it does to your husband, who may also see it as yellower (more greenish) than you do. The thing to remember is that all colors may appear dimmer as you grow older, so you may want to consider brighter hues. Remember, too, that color trends change over time, and that you may prefer different colors than your adult children and grandkids do.

Both blue and yellow are found in nature, which provides some of the associations we have with these hues. Yellow captures the joy of sunshine and can increase metabolism. It can create the impression of a larger space, so it can be a good choice for a kitchen bathroom or foyer. But it also can be overpowering—people tend to lose their tempers more often in yellow rooms!

Blue reflects sky and water, and causes your pulse and body temperature to drop, so it can enhance relaxation. Deeper blues have been found to aid concentration and increase productivity. But certain shades, such as pastel blues, can be cold and depressing.

One of the most popular colors for decorating is green, a color that is abundant in nature and helps to relieve stress. Consider that people who are going to appear on a TV show wait in a "green room" to help them relax. Green is almost always a good choice in

rooms where people gather, because it encourages relaxation and at the same time promotes togetherness.

Red stimulates appetite, so it's often used in dining rooms. Red draws people together and stimulates conversation, so people sometimes use red on one or more walls in living rooms and family rooms. In a foyer or entry, it makes a strong first impression. Red increases heartbeat and energy, but its intensity can be too stimulating, invoking feelings of hostility, so it's best used as an accent color. Pink, a tint of red, is more romantic, soothing and nurturing. Too much pink, however, can make you feel drained. Orange, a combination of red and yellow, is an energetic color that stimulates appetite and energy.

Brown, like green, is abundant in the outdoors, so we associate it with the natural world and feelings of solidarity and grounding. That's why warm tans and beiges are so popular. Darker brown shades make a room feel intimate, snug and safe.



Purple is less common in nature, but it has qualities that may make it a good choice. Purple is associated with royalty, wealth and sophistication. Lavender, often used in living rooms and bedrooms, calms and relaxes. Deep purple stimulates the brain's creative parts, so it would be great in a craft room or office but not in a bedroom.

Our strong reactions to color explain why neutrals like gray, white and light tan are most often seen on walls. Starting with a neutral background, you can change the mood of your room by using splashes of color.

In general, designers recommend picking out your furniture, textiles and furniture, because they come in a more limited range of colors than paint. Then decide on your paint color, depending on the mood you want to create in your room.

Keep in mind that intense, brilliant shades raise the energy of the room, while lighter colors are more calming and make rooms seem bigger and brighter. Darker shades are warmer and make big rooms feel more intimate.

After you paint a room, give yourself a few days to see how it makes you feel and whether you like it. Remember, it's just paint, and you can easily change it.