



This article is a reprint from

Energy magazine™

Sign up for your FREE subscription — www.energymagazineonline.com



How Color Changes the Spectrum of Your Health and Wellbeing

Look around. What colors do you see? Unless you are colorblind, you probably encounter a range of colors in the clothes you wear, the food you eat, the landscape and other items you see on a daily basis. You might feel drawn to some of these colors, while others leave you feeling drained.

Colors influence people, which is why they are used for a variety of purposes from marketing to healing. In fact, color therapy, also known as chromotherapy, was used by ancient civilizations as diverse as the Egyptians, Chinese and Greeks. The modern theory behind color therapy¹ stipulates that the organs and limbs of the body vibrate at certain energies that harmonize with the vibration frequencies of colors. When the body's vibrations change, it can lead to dysfunction or disease. Certain colors help to shift the energy back into balance in order to heal, and this association typically correlates with the chakras².

The therapeutic potential of color does not just begin and end with color therapy. The emotional and physical influences of color provide several potential benefits to your body and mind's wellbeing, which is why you should strive to surround yourself with the right colors in every aspect of your life.

Color Influences Emotions

Green with envy. Red with anger. Feeling blue. Our language is filled with instances of color reflecting emotion—and with color evoking certain emotions. You might also be familiar with the utilization of the psychology of color³ for marketing due to its ability to connect with certain emotions—the power to stimulate them. The relationship between emotions and color might be an individualized experience. Some authors contend that there is a cultural connection⁴ to the meaning of certain colors.

The color choices that you make might also be influenced by your current emotions. In one study, researchers showed videos to participants that were either associated with joy or fear. Afterwards, they were asked to choose an appropriate color⁵ using sliders. The researchers found that the participants in general selected brighter colors to match with joy, and these tended to be in the red-yellow spectrum. The participants tended to correlate the fear videos with the cyan-bluish hues.

Colors also have the power to stimulate certain psychological states or actions. For example, red is highly associated with aggression and alertness. It also has the potential to make people anxious. In one study, researchers found that reading words in red type or reading the word red in any color type led to increased stress⁶, ultimately affecting cognitive performance and making it harder for people to read the words. Other colors have the capacity to improve the psychological state.

Using Color to Express Emotions Creates a More Positive Outlook on Life

Color is also a tool for expressing emotions. Art therapy is a great example of the positive psychological effects of harnessing color for emotional exploration and expression. One study looked to see if using color as part of art therapy improved stroke patients' purpose in life⁷, as well as that of their caretakers.

Upon utilizing colors in art therapy, including as a way to express their emotions, both caregivers and patients had improved scores on a *Purpose in Life* questionnaire. Interestingly, the patients also chose a greater variety of colors, including those that correspond to more positive emotions, to express their emotions later in the process, reflecting the improvement in their emotional state during the therapy sessions.

Harnessing the Power of Color with Light Therapy

Surrounding yourself with color is not the only way to harness its power for your health. The benefits of color might also stem from the light waves. Electromagnetic waves that



are not visible to the human eye have the ability to affect the psychology and physiology of people, such as UV light, Gamma rays, infrared light, microwaves, X-rays and more. Following a similar logic, then it is possible that the waves of light within the visual spectrum⁸ would also be able to affect people not just on an emotional or psychological level, but on a physiological level as well.

One way that light waves might provide therapeutic value is through impacting the melatonin and serotonin pathways. Serotonin and melatonin regulate the sleep-wake cycle, as well as heart rate, temperature, blood pressure and more. You have probably heard a lot recently about the negative effects of using blue light items⁹, which is found on digital devices like phones and tablets, at night. This is typically due to their effects on circadian rhythms and sleep patterns. Through utilizing light therapy, it is possible to modulate these important regulators that ensure you get sufficient sleep, as well as regulate many other components of health.

For example, one study found blue-enriched white light¹⁰ helped to keep people awake and improved cognitive performance during the day. Therefore, blue light itself is not bad—it is at what time of day you are exposed to it. Another study looked at the effects of red, green and blue light on heart rate variability¹¹, or the time between heartbeats, and autonomic regulation. Heart rate variability has a direct correlation with the efficiency of regulatory systems and overall health. They found that the different colored lights had the capacity to influence heart rate variability in a short period of time.

With so many benefits, it is high time that you focus on what colors you encounter on a daily basis. You might find that some have a negative influence on your health, while others might have a positive effect. It is possible to harness the therapeutic power of colors without specifically engaging in light or color therapy. You simply have to pay attention to your environment and make changes as needed. €



Dr. Deanna Minich is an internationally recognized, cutting-edge wellness and lifestyle medicine expert who has mastered the art of integrating ancient healing traditions with modern science. Her unique “whole self” approach to nutrition looks at physiology, psychology, eating and living within what she calls the “7 Systems of Health.” A five-time book author and founder of Food & Spirit, she continues to do detox programs with individuals to help them achieve better health. Her new book is *Whole Detox*, published by HarperCollins in March 2016. For more information, visit www.DrDeannaMinich.com.

References

1. Azeemi, S.T., & Raza, S.M. (2005, December). A critical analysis of chromotherapy and its scientific evolution. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 2(4), 481-8. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16322805>
2. Minich, D. (n.d.). Systems of health infographic. *Whole Detox*. Retrieved from <http://whole-detox.com/infographic/>
3. Ciotti, G. (2016, April 13). The psychology of color in marketing and branding. *Entrepreneur*. Retrieved from <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/233843>
4. Sutton, T.M., & Altarriba, J. (2016, October). Finding the positive in all of the negative: Facilitation for color-related emotion words in a negative priming paradigm. *Acta Psychologica*, 170, 84-93. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27380622>
5. Dael, N., Perseguers, M.N., Marchand, C., Antonietti, J.P., & Mohr, C. (2016). Put on that colour, it fits your emotion: Colour appropriateness as a function of expressed emotion. *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 69(8), 1619-30. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26339950>
6. Bertrams, A., Baumeister, R.F., Englert, C., & Furley, P. (2015, March). Ego depletion in color priming research: self-control strength moderates the detrimental effect of red on cognitive test performance. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 41(3), 311-22. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25567999>
7. Kim, M.K., & Kang, S.D. (2013, January). Effects of art therapy using color on purpose in life in patients with stroke and their caregivers. *Yonsei Medical Journal*, 54(1), 15-20. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23225793>
8. Radeljak, S., Zarković-Palijan, T., Kovacević, D., & Kovac, M. (2008, October). Chromotherapy in the regulation of neurohormonal balance in human brain—complementary application in modern psychiatric treatment. *Collegium Antropologicum*, 32 Suppl 2, 185-8. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19138024>
9. Chellappa, S.L., Steiner, R., Oelhafen, P., Lang, D., Götz, T., Krebs, J., & Cajochen, C. (2013, October). Acute exposure to evening blue-enriched light impacts on human sleep. *Journal of Sleep Research*, (5), 573-80. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23509952>
10. Viola, A.U., James, L.M., Schlangen, L.J., & Dijk, D.J. (2008, August). Blue-enriched white light in the workplace improves self-reported alertness, performance and sleep quality. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*, 34(4), 297-306. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18815716>
11. Schäfer, A., & Kratky, K.W. (2006, June). The effect of colored illumination on heart rate variability. *Forsch Komplementmedizin*, 13(3), 167-73. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16868362>