

Determining Personal Colors

Cooperative Extension Service
College of Agriculture and
Home Economics



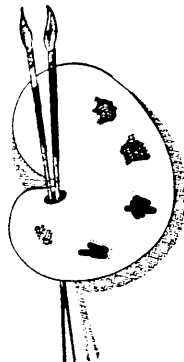
Guide C-315

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To select becoming colors for your wardrobe, you must consider three very important factors—your skin, your eyes and your hair. Your personal coloring gives you clues to the colors you can wear best in makeup and fashions. Some people even go as far as to use their personal coloring to determine the colors they use to decorate their home.

Which colors one selects to wear are important in creating an attractive appearance. Becoming colors add clearness or glow to the skin and bring out the color of the hair and eyes. Unbecoming colors appear to drain color from the skin, leaving it sallow and unhealthy looking, or causing it to appear more flrid or purple.



Whatever your color choices, the emphasis should be on you. You can wear any color you want to, in the right location, in the right amount and in the right combination. Some colors may not look unattractive, but they won't be your best colors. Taking the time to determine your best colors is important if you want to:

- highlight your hair coloring
- make your eyes sparkle
- plan an attractive, workable wardrobe
- avoid costly mistakes when selecting new fashions.

Your personal coloring patterns can give you a clue to the color family, brightness, and intensity you will want to use in your wardrobe. If you are

not pleased with your coloring, work to offset it by selecting wardrobe colors that will de-emphasize it.

There are no set rules for color use, but there are some principles that can be used to achieve a pleasing wardrobe color scheme. The skin color is the most important consideration. However, when either the hair color or eye coloring are outstanding, they should be emphasized over the skin coloring.



As you begin the search for your most becoming colors, you must determine the underlying color in you complexion. Is it warm or cool? Warm complexions have yellow, peach or red undertones. Cool complexions have pink, violet or blue undertones.

To determine your basic coloring, analyze your skin without makeup. Be sure to use strong natural light or incandescent lighting; fluorescent lighting causes colors to look different. Wear a light, neutral color or place a white towel around your shoulders so no external colors interfere.

Now, look at your face in a good mirror. What are the major colors that you see? Do not be misled by a suntan. Most skins, regardless of race or tan, will have undertones of yellow, red, pink

or blue. If you have trouble determining the color on your face, look at the inside of your wrist or your stomach.

After determining basic skin tone, warm or cool, consider the color of your hair and eyes. These three colors, skin, hair and eyes, make up your personal coloring, and must be considered as you select makeup and fashion colors to create an attractive appearance. Colors that flatter your skin usually look good with your hair and eye coloring, but not always. In such cases, always select the color that looks best with your skin.

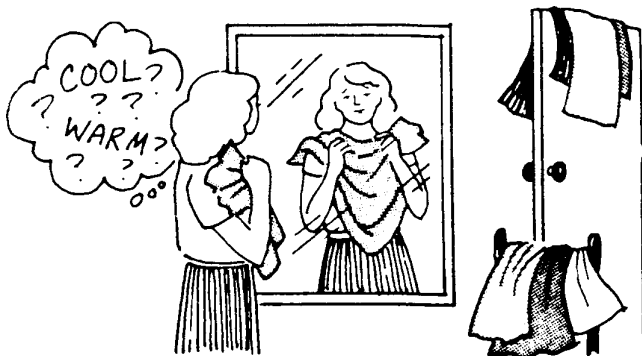
If you are unsure of your basic coloring, try on a few colors to determine how they affect your appearance. Use the following cool and warm colors for your analysis:

Warm	Cool
Ivory	Pure white
Yellow green	Blue green
Bright orange	Bright pink
Red orange	Burgundy
Dark brown	Black

Ask yourself the following questions about each color:

1. Does my skin glow?
2. Does the color cause skin imperfections or wrinkles to be less noticeable?
3. Does the color bring out the highlights in my hair?
4. Do my eyes sparkle with this color?

Generally the colors from one group, warm or cool, will be more flattering. This indicates your complexion is more warm or more cool in nature. If a color causes your face to have shadows or if it reflects the color, avoid that color in your wardrobe and makeup.



If your complexion has undertones of pink, violet or blue, you have a cool complexion. Your fashion and makeup colors should have similar undertones. Colors with undertones that are warm (yellow) will be less becoming for your complexion.

People with warm skin tones, yellow, peach or red, will look best in colors with the same undertones. This complexion is called warm. If you have a warm complexion, avoid colors in your fashions and makeup that have cool (blue) undertones.

Try these methods to enhance your complexion colors.

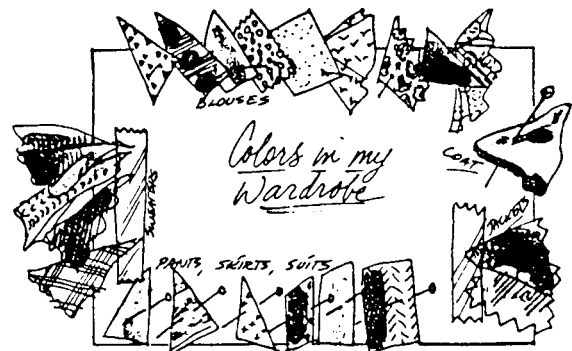
- Place the color's complement next to it.
Example: Green with red hair, purple with blonde hair.
- Combine the color with a neutral color.
Example: Light pastel with dark brown hair.
- Repeat a large amount of the same color in a lower intensity near it. Example: Grayed blue with clear blue eyes.
- Repeat the same color in a brighter intensity, but in a small amount. Example: Emerald green scarf with green eyes.

To de-emphasize a personal color:

- Avoid complementary colors. Example: Sallow skin looks more yellow when purple is worn.
- Use color of brighter intensity in large amounts. Example: Bright rust with auburn hair. Bright yellow with blonde hair.

Special considerations:

- Becoming colors add clearness or glow to the skin and bring out the highlights of the hair. Unbecoming colors are those that drain color from the skin, leaving it sallow and unhealthy



in appearance, or emphasizing unpleasant violet shadows or a florid tone.

- The wearer should be the center of interest, not the color or colors being worn. Natural blondes should avoid intense colors because of their delicate coloring. Those with a neutral complexion should avoid intense or bright acid hues.
- Avoid brighter intensities of colors similar to those present in your complexion.
- People with cool coloring generally appear more attractive when wearing cool colors, while people with warm coloring find warm colors more becoming.
- People with strong value contrasts in personal coloring can wear strong contrasts such as black with white.
- People with close values or little contrast in personal coloring should avoid vivid intensities,

strong value contrasts, monotonous, and beiges or grays that closely match in value.

- Colors may be more becoming in fabrics of uneven, dull textures than shiny, smooth textures.
- In using neutrals, remember that white seems to add color, black seems to take away color, and gray seems to neutralize other colors.
- An unbecoming color can be made wearable with careful selection of the amount used and the placement of the color. Use it in combination with a dark accent or add a becoming color or light value near the face.

Knowing your best colors will help you look your best. Once you have determined your skin coloring, you can select fashion and makeup colors that are most flattering to you. Remember, your goal is to look as healthy and sparkling as possible. Wearing the right colors can help you do just that.

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