

The Power of Colour

Discover how the fabric colours you choose can boost your mood and confidence

Written by Michelle Rowley



Having your colours analysed simplifies the process of choosing which fabric you should buy for your next me-made.

Photograph: Dougal Waters/Getty Images

We've all been there; standing in the fabric shop, staring in wonder at rolls up on rolls of enticing fabrics and feeling slightly giddy at all the possible options for our next make. So many exciting possibilities can, however, not only be thrilling but also somewhat overwhelming. Who hasn't felt a little bit fraught when trying to reach a decision with limited time and money to spend but a wealth of tempting fabrics to choose from?

LIMITLESS

As someone who sews their own clothes, with the ability to create almost anything you want, it might seem like the world is your oyster. However, such limitless possibilities can sometimes be a hindrance. It's no wonder we sometimes face analysis paralysis when choosing fabric because we've all experienced the frustration of getting it wrong. Lured by the bright and beautiful, the drapey or dotty and stripy or shiny, the must-have fabric in the shop can end up as a garment that just doesn't work for us or

remains sat in the stash for months on end. "I've had clients who sew who have rooms filled to the brim with amazing fabrics. They've been like magpies when they've seen and loved them but now don't know what to do with them," says personal stylist, Lindsay Edwards.

TRANSFORMATIVE

When Lindsay lost her confidence with how to dress, she had her colours analysed and found it to be transformative. She explains:

"I had a wardrobe full of clothes but didn't feel good. After discovering my colours, it simplified getting dressed and my eyes and skin looked better in the clothes I wore."

Having benefitted from the process, Lindsay trained in colour analysis to help other women feel more confident and elevate the way they look. Colour analysis considers whether you have cool or warm undertones to your skin, as well as whether you have high contrasting features (a la Courtney Cox with pale skin, dark hair and blue eyes) or less contrasting. Starting with a wallet containing 135 colour swatches, Lindsay identifies the best 15 colours to suit

"Discovering my colours simplified getting dressed."



Lindsay identifies the best 15 colours based on her client's hair, eye and skin colouring from a wallet containing 135 colours.



Lindsay suggests choosing fabrics with your best colours to be worn by your face and less flattering colours away from your face.



Kate believes how you feel when wearing a certain colour is going to have an impact on your life and future.



Colour healing is based on the belief of seven chakras or energy points within the body and has been used since Stoic times.

Illustration: Ramziya Abdrahmanova. Getty Images

her clients based on their hair, eye and skin colouring.

INVEST IN YOURSELF

"Getting your colours analysed is an investment that in a very short amount of time pays off hugely," says Lindsay. Learning which colours suit you best can reduce the overwhelm without needing to limit your fabric choice options, whilst also helping to decide which garments to make in which colours. "You want to wear your best colours up by your face and less flattering colours away from your face," explains Lindsay. "It can help sewists know how to niche down their ideas. If you see a fabric you love, but it isn't your most flattering colour, you might decide to leave it or buy enough for a skirt instead of a maxi dress."

ENERGY HEALING

Personal stylist Kate Harrison believes that colours not only have the power to make us look better but also to feel better. Through her 20 years' experience in the style industry, Kate has developed her own system of styling people using not only colour analysis but also energy healing through colour.

"I aim to turn your wardrobe into a wellbeing tool," says Kate. We all know that 'eating a rainbow' is good for us. We know how much better a blue sky makes us feel and

how the sight of sunflowers can bring us joy. So why not the colour in the clothes we wear? "Colour therapy and colour healing has been around since Stoic times, when it was used as a healing

method prior to antibiotics and meditation to heal different ailments of the body, often through the use of stained-glass windows or fabrics." Colour healing is based on the belief of seven chakras, or energy points, within the body. "Each chakra boosts different areas of your wellbeing and has a colour connected to it, with the lower the point on the body linked to lowest colour vibrations," she adds.

"We can introduce people to colours to help them with certain things. It's like vitamins, you can supplement your well-

"You can supplement your wellbeing through colour."

being through colour. We are being affected by the colours around us whether we know it or not, so we may as well harness them in something that we have to do every single day – getting dressed." According to Kate, brighter colours have a stronger impact on the chakras but it's not always the case that we want colours to be energy giving. When choosing a colour for your next sewing project, you first need to decide what you want to achieve. Take for example sewing a dress for a first date. "Whilst red is a great colour for giving off confidence, what you might actually want is something calming, so green would be a better colour," says Kate. "What's important is how it makes you feel because that's what's going to have a bigger impact on your life and future." Both Lindsay and Kate believe everyone can wear every colour, what matters is finding the best tone and shade for you. One of the easiest ways to introduce colour into your wardrobe initially is to choose scarves in your colours.

What's your favourite primary colour?

RED

As the colour with the lowest vibration, red is linked to the root chakra at the base of the spine and thus feeling 'rooted' and self-confident. "Red can really boost confidence but if you're not confident in yourself, it can feel very overpowering," Kate explains. If that's the case, you could bring in hints of the colour in a print fabric. "There is a red for everybody," says Lindsay. "If you have a warm colouring, orangey warm reds (like tomato red) will suit you better. Whilst those with a cool colouring, will suit a bluer based red."

ORANGE

Linked to the sacral chakra, located below the bellybutton, orange is associated with trusting your gut and is thought to stimulate creativity and appetite. "It's considered a friendly colour, so wear orange to be approachable," says Kate. "As it's the colour linked to the ability to go with your own mind, rather than seeking validation from others, it's a good colour for those wanting to believe in themselves more."

YELLOW

"Yellow is joy!" says Kate. "It's the happiest colour in the spectrum. As it's linked to the solar plexus, it is the biggest energy giver (like the yellow sun) as it vibrates right in the middle of the body." Wear it for an energy boost!

GREEN

Associated with the heart chakra, green is

considered a balancing colour as it has a mid-range frequency at the centre of the body. "Most people think red is the colour of love but it isn't. It's green – it's self-love," says Kate. According to Lindsay, people with light colouring suit the lightest tones of green, whilst those with deeper colouring suit deeper stronger richer greens. "If you have a warm colouring, you'll look best in autumnal greens (such as moss, olive and khaki) and those with a cooler colouring suit bluer greens (like turquoise and aquamarine)." "If you have high contrast features choose bright, neon or lime green whereas people with less contrast suit softer greens."

BLUE

As the colour linked to the throat chakra, blue is connected to communication and speaking your truth. "It's the colour for opening up communication channels and has a calming and trusting energy," says Kate. It's perhaps no surprise then that the NHS, banks and insurance companies often use this colour.

INDIGO / VIOLET

"We seem to get more attracted to purples as we age and with age comes wisdom," says Kate. Could this be because indigo is the colour of the third eye chakra and violet the colour of the crown chakra? "The third eye reflects a knowing spiritual awareness of things other than ourselves," says Kate. The crown chakra, at the top of the head, is linked to intelligence.



ABOUT LINDSAY

Lindsay Edwards is a personal stylist, based in Bedfordshire and online, providing colour analysis, style consultations, wardrobe edits and personal shopping. Discover more at lindsayedwardsstylist.com



ABOUT KATE

Kate Harrison is a colour therapist and personal stylist with over 20 years' experience in the fashion and style industry. She helps women feel confident and excited to experiment. Find out more at thesoulfulstylist.com



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