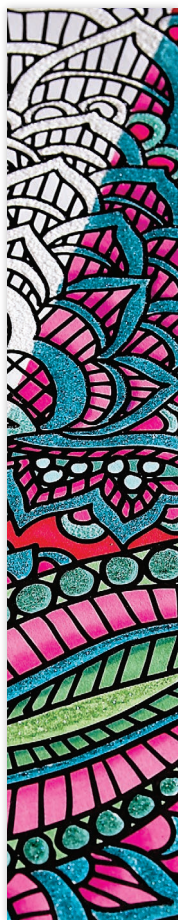AN INTRODUCTION TO

adult coloring

GETTING STARTED WITH
ADULT COLORING

So you're keen to give it a go, you want to find out what all the fuss is about, this 'adult coloring' bandwagon that everyone's jumping onto! Perhaps you've invested in your first book, and a set of pencils and you're now a little bit hooked and you're looking to take it a bit further! Then look no further than our helpful guide on how to get started. Here, we'll cover everything you need to know to really get you started on this incredible journey.

We are going to guide you through 3 stages which will explain to you everything you need to know about the basics to adult coloring. These are;

STAGE 1
WHERE TO START

STAGE 2
SUPPLIES

STAGE 3
BASIC TECHNIQUES

WHAT YOU NEED

| An instrument to color with | Imagery to color |

The second one is easy!
there are tons of free coloring
pages out there if you're just
wanting to dip your toe in the
water, or here are a few tips
about choosing imagery that's
right for you if you're going to
invest in a book.

But where to start?

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR
COLORING BOOK

There are **3 important things** to consider when choosing a book to purchase:

ARTWORK THEME

Choose something that interests you personally. Some people like animals or seascapes, other's just want a mass of detail so in that case you would choose mandala style books. There's some artwork that's more true to life, and others that are total fantasy, off the wall and great for escapism.
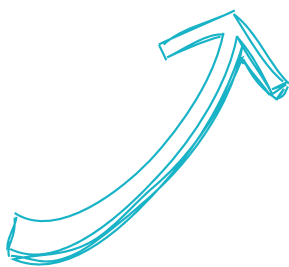
OPEN SPACE IN AN IMAGE

If you're wanting to just do straightforward coloring then you will probably want artwork where there are smaller areas to color, however if you're wanting to **try blending your colors then you need something with more open space.**

LEVEL OF DETAIL

If this is your first purchase and you're just starting off then try to choose something that's not too detailed and therefore each page won't take too long to color in. For all the enjoyment is in the coloring, you'll find that **there's a huge sense of achievement that comes with actually completing an image**, so you want to make sure you're setting yourself an achievable challenge. As you progress on your coloring journey then you can advance onto more detailed imagery.

What Should I Color With?

CRAYONS

These are **relatively inexpensive and easy to come across** – you can pick up a set of a dozen colors to get started, or there are mammoth compendiums with hundreds of colors in.

On the plus side: **they are simple to use, inexpensive, easy to apply and have a nice waxy finish**. As we all grew up using crayons, we find them easy to use and have that natural love for them stemming back to our childhood! However, thinking of the negatives: **they don't have a precise tip so you can't achieve any detail whatsoever, they break easily, you use them up really quickly, the coverage isn't even and they are a nightmare to sharpen!**

PENCILS

There are many types of pencils but **2 main ones you'll come across - wax based and watercolor.** On the whole, the recommendation for a beginner is to **start with a mid quality wax based penci**l – It should be **easy to use, be able to go on the journey with you from beginner to intermediate coloring and you'll get a smooth rewarding laydown of color.** If at a later stage in your coloring journey you want to incorporate water coloring, then try a watercolor pencil – you're better off spending your budget on fewer, better quality pencils than buying a larger set of lower quality pencils, because you can easily blend and mix the colors of your higher quality set. Than buying a larger set of lower quality pencils. However details of both to follow, to help you make your decision.

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR
COLORING TOOL

WAX BASED PENCILS

Wax based pencils vary massively in their quality (and therefore price). Most pencils that are merchandised and marketed alongside adult coloring books are lower end wax based pencils. Within the pencil you have the pigment (which is the color), something to pad out the inside bit of the pencil (called a filler – such as talc), and the wax holding it all together, (the more expensive the pencil, means less 'filler' and more pigment) The higher end pencils available are almost pure pigment and wax with no filler.

With less filler, the pencil will lay down a smoother color with ease. Hence with very inexpensive pencils you'll find they are really scratchy and difficult to lay down the color with. If you start off with just a cheap set of pencils (as most people do) don't be disheartened if you aren't happy with the smoothness of your results – just know it's time to upgrade to a better calibre of pencil!

A mid range pencil is most advisable for adult coloring – you'll be able to **sharpen it to a good point to get into the detail areas, and with a bit of practice you'll be able to start and blend your colors together too**. Our future guides in this series will have more information regarding how to blend.

WATER COLOR PENCILS

Generally the more expensive of the two options, and on the whole are the **more difficult to work with** as a beginner, however if you do master them **you can get some really vibrant colors in watercolor, and also blend shades together beautifully,** achieving a more artistic feel to your coloring.

Coloring with watercolor can be really rewarding, but it can also be frustrating if you're not using the correct medium of paper. You'll get the **best results with watercolor pencils, if you're coloring artwork printed onto a watercolor cardstock** – this allows the color to sit on the surface and be moved with water – where as coloring onto regular cardstock and then trying to move it with water can result in your coloring lines looking scratchy and the watercolor effect being patchy.

As with wax based pencils, **you only get what you pay for, and cheaper watercolor pencils may look vibrant in the box, but will not be as vibrant on paper or when they have water applied to them**. Again a **top quality watercolor pencil should lay down well and the color should drag out well when using a waterbrush and will look really vibrant still when dry.**

What Should I Color With?

PENS / MARKERS

There are many different types of pens out there of varying quality, but on the whole a good rule of thumb is that **you get what you pay for.**

Cheap pens are just that – cheap, and **they dry up or run out of ink fast which can be frustrating when you're mid way through a page.** If you're going to really commit to using pens/markers in your adult coloring projects, then it's worth investing in some mid- quality ones – a smaller selection of colors in a better quality product is much better than having a vast array of different pens of poorer quality.

When choosing a better quality pen, you're likely to end up with one that's alcohol based. There are some real benefits to using alcohol pens, and also some things to watch out for.

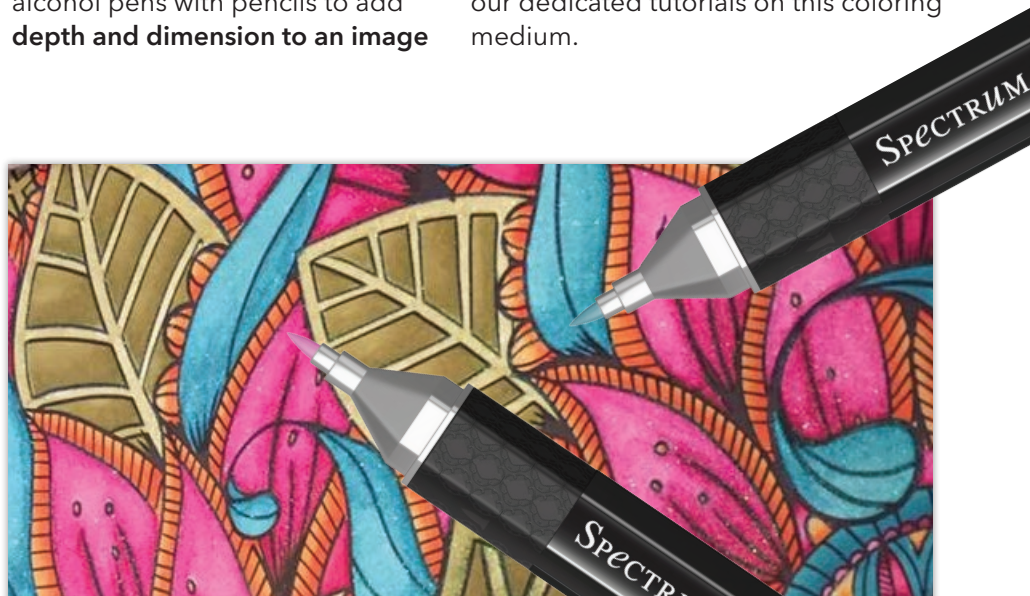# HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR
COLORING TOOL

THE BENEFITS

- The alcohol in the pen gives the coloring a smooth finish so **you won't get any lines** in your coloring
- **It's just easy to color with these types of markers** – the ink flows easily, the colors come out vibrant and it's quite satisfying from a colorists point of view
- **Alcohol pens can be blended** together so you can start shading your colors
- **Alcohol can color onto different surfaces**, making these pens way more versatile than just using in your adult coloring books
- Many brands of **alcohol pens are refillable** making them more cost effective
- You can color over the top of your alcohol pens with pencils to add **depth and dimension to an image**

BE CAREFUL!

- These are alcohol based, which means if you leave the lid off them then **they can dry out quickly** so try to remember to replace the cap when they are not in use.
- They are a dye based ink so **they will bleed through your paper** – they work better on a higher quality paper, and always remember to put a piece of scrap cardstock underneath your coloring page to prevent the ink from bleeding through onto the page or item below.
- Alcohol ink **takes slightly longer to dry** than a regular marker would

For more information on coloring, shading and blending with alcohol markers, then be sure to look out for our dedicated tutorials on this coloring medium.
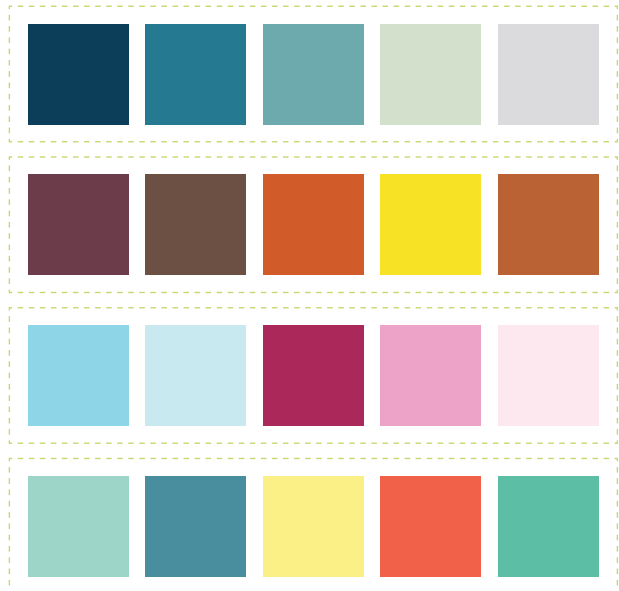
now you're fully equipped how do you get going?

If you are literally picking this up right from the very beginning (or reading this guide before you start) then **I'd recommend choosing a simple image, with lots of open space and bold lines and just practice.** For many people, coloring might be something they haven't done since they were at school, and although it seems easy, and you may remember it being easy, you'll be amazed at the transition you'll make from your first couple of images to really getting yourself back into it.

The next challenge is choosing a pallet of colors to work from – we have a whole book dedicated to color theory and choosing a colour pallet, but as a starter here are a few simple pallets to get you going:

a few Handy Tips

1. Work from the outside inwards on any given section – it's easier to stay in the lines this way.

2. Take your time – this is supposed to be stress relieving, so be slow and methodical with it – you'll also be less likely to make a mistake

3. Turn the page so that the direction you're coloring in is in line with your wrist and flows easily

4. Don't be frightened to leave some white space – it can draw the eye in to the main focal point in the image

5. Don't press too hard – with pencils you'll wear down the nibs too quickly, or with pens you'll end up with bleed through or tearing the paper

6. Take care of your tools – keep the tops on your pens and store them horizontally, and with pencils keep them nice and sharp

GO & share your week 1 creations

CATCH UP ON THE COURSE **HERE**   SHARE YOUR CREATION **HERE**   FIND INSPIRATION **HERE**

Crafter's Companion