



## Making Color Sense Out of Color Theory

By Nannette Dalton

Recently I was looking at some layouts in the gallery, and one layout really caught my eye. As I looked at it I asked myself, “what is it about this layout that I love?” I realized that it was the colors that she used to put it together. You know me, I’m a “matchy matchy” girl. I love my papers and photos to match each other, but this layout did not do that. It got me thinking; maybe I need to learn a little more about color and how to use it in my layouts.

There is a lot to learn, I found, about color. There is so much that it could fill several encyclopedias! However, there are two basic categories of color theory that I found useful: the color wheel and color harmony.

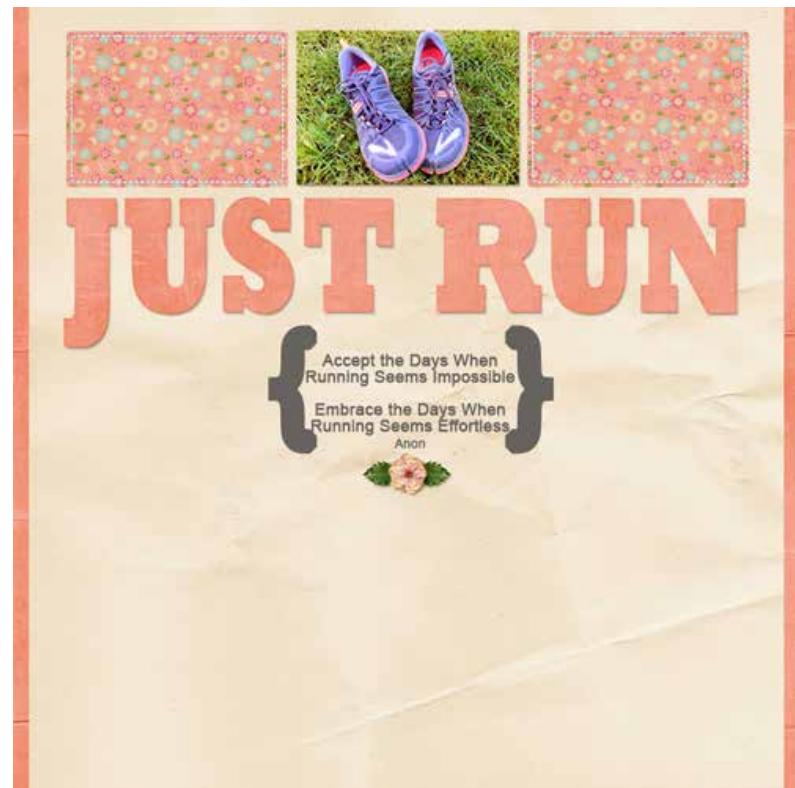
When I think of harmony, I think of music, because I used to teach piano. Harmony is a pleasing arrangement of parts or notes. It is the same with colors; harmony is a pleasing arrangement of colors. When you put certain colors together, they are pleasing to the eye.

So let’s look at the layout that I loved from the gallery. It is a layout by Lidia, who is on the [Digital Scrapper Creative Team](#), called “Just Run,” and used with her permission.

The color that stands out to me in her photo is the purple in the shoes. If I were to scrap that same photo, there would have been some purple on my page somewhere to tie it all together. But, notice that she has not added any purple to her page, and it still works. It not only works, it really popped out at me.

In my last tutorial, I introduced you to the Kuler website. I am going to use this resource again to help you and me better understand how colors work together to make nice harmonies. The harmonies are called Color Rules on the website.

In exploring more about the most common used rules—Analogous, Monochromatic, Complementary, and Triad—I am going to take Lidia’s layout and use the purple color in her shoes to create the same layout in each of the color rules. Here is how I did that.

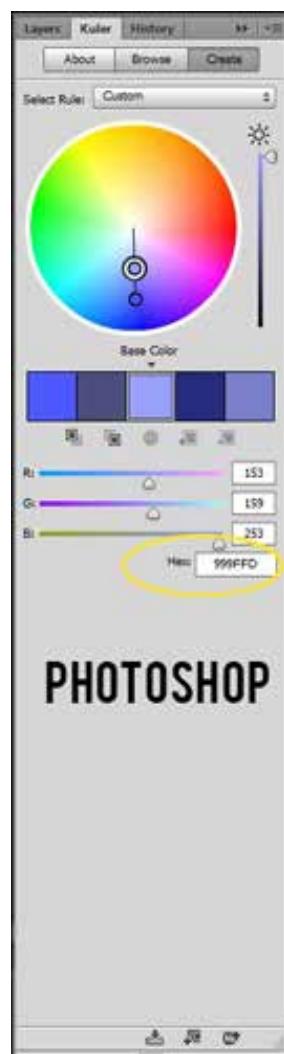
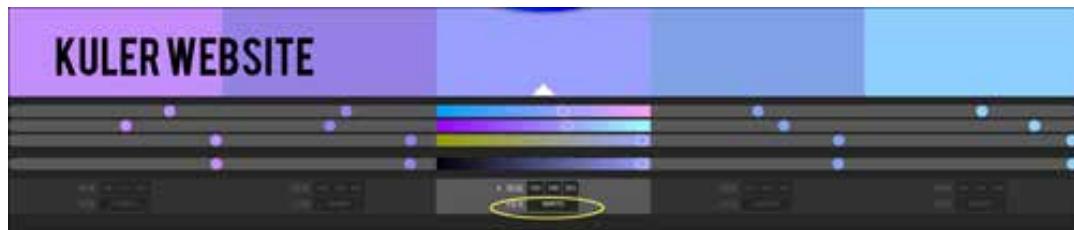


Color Rule

- Analogous
- Monochromatic
- Triad
- Complementary
- Compound
- Shades
- Custom

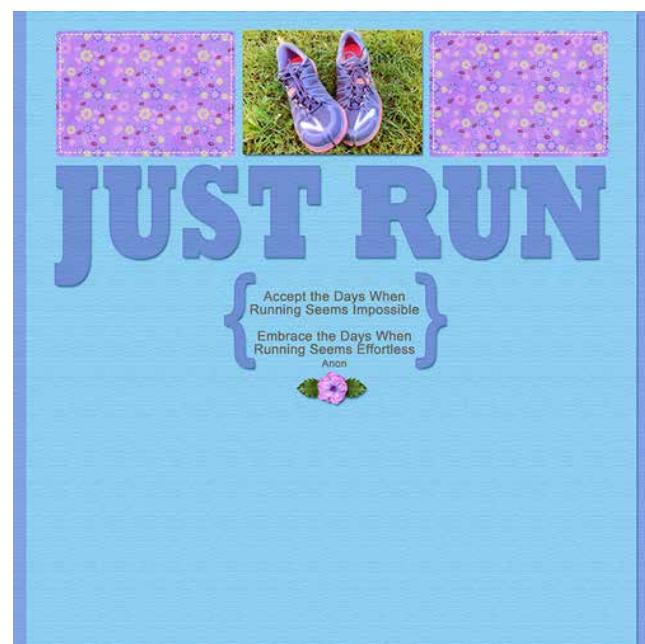
## Step One: Access Kuler and Input a Color

- Open a photo (File > Open).
- Click on the Foreground Color Chip to open the Color Picker.
- On the photo, click on a color of your choice.
- In the Color Picker dialog box, highlight and copy the Hex Code. Mine is 999FFD.
- Go to the [Adobe Kuler](#) website. (Photoshop: In the Menu Bar, Choose Window > Extensions > Kuler.)
- On the Kuler website, click in the Hex Code box. (Photoshop: In the Kuler panel, click in the Hex Code box.)
- Paste the Hex Code into the box.



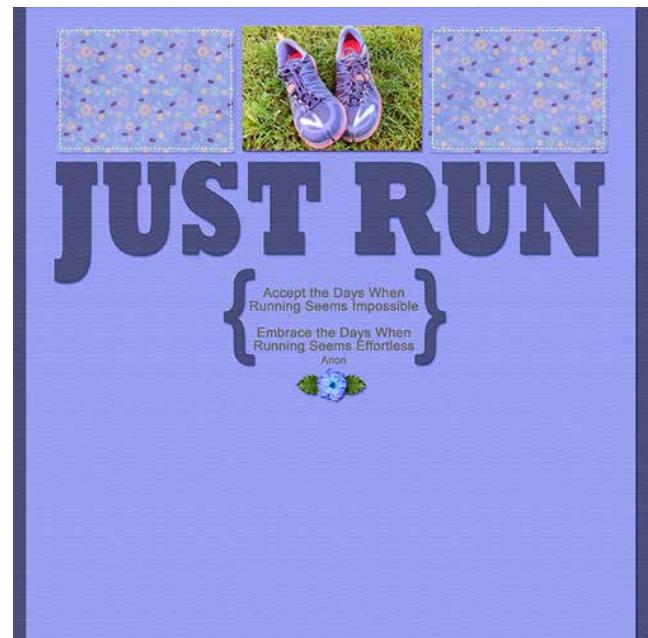
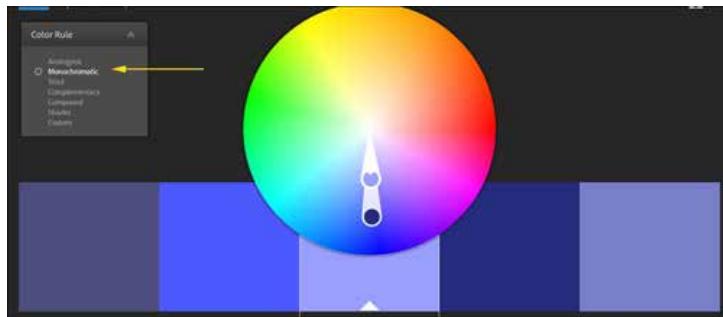
## Step Two: Explore the Analogous Color Rule

- In the Color Rule drop-down menu, choose Analogous. (Photoshop: In the Kuler panel, open the Rule drop-down menu and choose Analogous.)
- The Analogous color scheme uses colors that are next to each other on the color wheel. They usually match well and create a serene and comfortable design.
- For scrapbooking, choose one color to dominate, a second to support, and a third color to use as an accent.



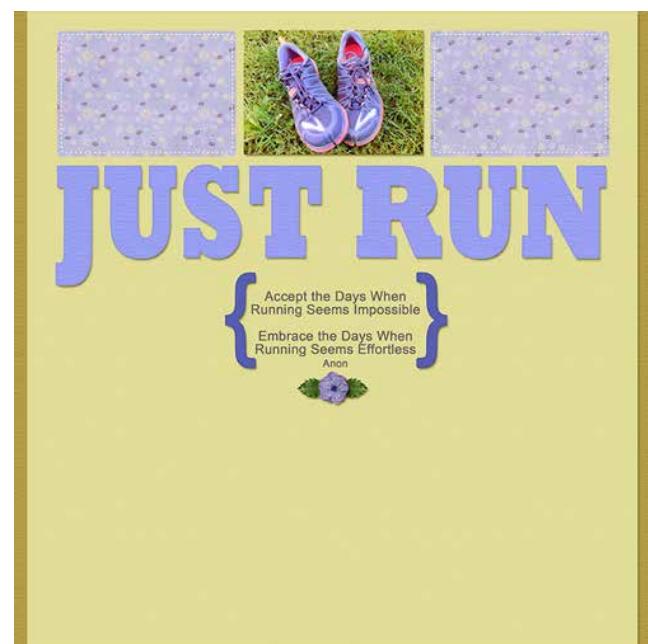
## Step Three: Explore the Monochromatic Color Rule

- Choose the Monochromatic Color Rule.
- The Monochromatic color scheme uses differing shades and saturations of one color.
- For scrapbooking, use this scheme for a more polished or elegant layout. This scheme is also great for creating a particular mood or just adding some color to a black and white scheme.



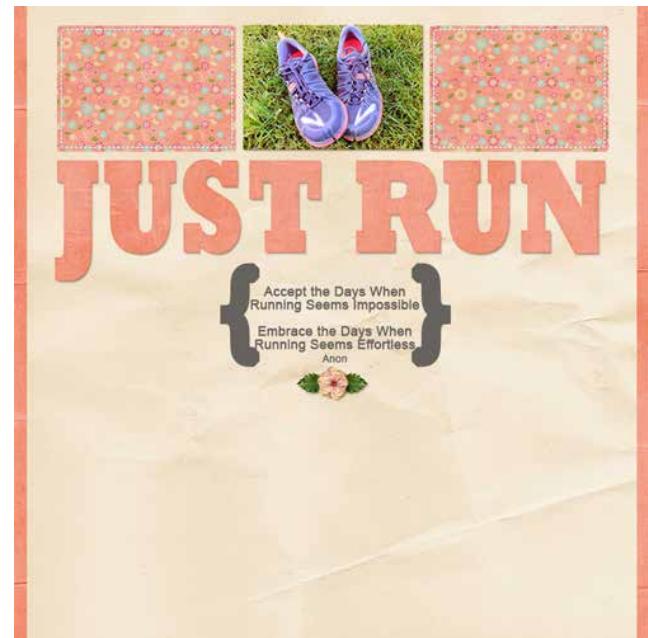
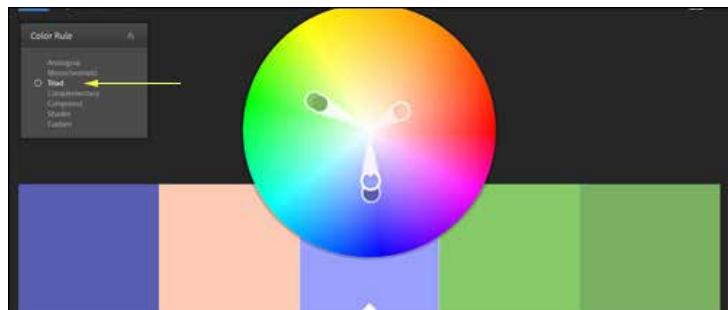
## Step Four: Explore the Complementary Color Rule

- Choose the Complementary Color Rule.
- The Complementary color scheme uses colors that are opposite each other on the color wheel and are considered to be complementary colors.
- For scrapbooking, this color scheme can be tricky because it can be a little jarring. It works well when you want something to stand out. I have to admit that when I saw it on the color wheel, I went, "yuck." But, it works on the layout.



## Step Five: Explore the Triad Color Rule

- Choose the Triad Color Rule.
- The Triad color scheme uses colors that are evenly spaced around the color wheel. They tend to be very vibrant.
- For scrapbooking, make sure that the colors you use are carefully balanced. Let one color dominate and use the two others for accents. Lidia used this theme to perfection on her layout.



Okay, my assignment for you, if you choose to accept it, is to make a layout using one of these color schemes. Share it in the Digi Scrap Tutorial Gallery, and be sure to let us know which rule you used so we can all learn a little more about how color works.

## Credits

**DigiScrap Tutorial:** Making Color Sense Out of Color Theory by Nannette Dalton

**Layout:** Just Run by Lidia

**Daily Life Bonus Video** by Linda Sattgast; part of January 2014 Premier

A Mother's Heart by Susan Bartolini

Christmas Wishes by Kristin Cronin Barrow

Beautiful You by Kristin Cronin-Barrow

**Fonts:** Sathu and Rockwell Extra Bold