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## FEATURES

# Ribbon Relief

By Ng Yi Xiang  
Images from 123d

*Pink, blue, red, black, rainbow, you name it. Seen given out as an award and used throughout the fashion industry, beyond the surface, a ribbon is more than just a pretty accessory to have pinned on to your clothes, as it is a symbol of fighting for a good cause, such as tackling health and social issues, and human rights. Do you know the colours and the significance behind these ribbons?*



## Pink Ribbon

This month we'll see plenty of pink ribbons, as it's the International Breast Cancer Awareness month! So make sure you show your support for women by pinning up a cute pink ribbon as well as for men (pink and blue ribbon). Not only would it tell breast cancer patients that they're not alone in battling this deadly disease, but by having the pink ribbon on, it could also be a dedication to those who are born with a cleft palate and is also a symbol of birth parents. Wear a pink ribbon and help spread awareness!



## Orange Ribbon

Going against the act of self-injury, the orange ribbon represents more than its awareness day as it is used in different parts of the world, each with its own significance. In Singapore, it is a symbol of racial and religious harmony as the colour orange symbolises universal friendship, familial ties and kinship. Check out the orange ribbon celebrations as it is also used to support independent music scenes while it continues to make its way to Sweden and could potentially mark a change of government in Sweden. It is also a colour used to champion human rights as seen in the infamous David Matthew Hicks' case. Orange is an amber alert to missing children.



## Green Ribbon

Have you got some environmental issues? We've not seen many who have brought out their green ribbons out of the closet on World Environment Day (June 5), but we do know that it also represents mental health and organ and tissue donors. It also creates awareness for kidney cancer, cerebral palsy, bipolar and Tourette syndrome (a condition where people tend to repeat an action, movements or sounds they do not have control over).



## Purple Ribbon

It could happen in a blink of an eye to anyone including you or your loved ones. The purple ribbon has been a colour of courage, honour and survival to not only the victims of domestic violence, animal and wildlife abuse but to cancer survivors and patients of Alzheimer's, lupus and macular degeneration. Last year, the US saw the usage of purple ribbon by the Children Advocacy Committee who aims to create awareness of the dangers in leaving children unattended in vehicles. The purple ribbon could also be seen wrapped around trees or tied onto car antennas or placed at homicide scenes in the US.



## Blue Ribbon

Blue ribbon may be the first prize in competitions held in the United States, but you certainly would not want to be the first to get the diseases or social ills associated with creating public awareness on colon cancer (baby blue ribbon), malaria, osteoporosis, Huntington's disease or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and child abuse (the colour blue represents bruises). The blue ribbon has seen more than a silent protest against (then) World Bank president Paul Wolfowitz, and Japan uses the blue ribbon to protest against the abduction of their citizens by the North Koreans. The colour blue represents the Sea of Japan and the sky which is the only link between the abductees and their families.

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### Yellow Ribbon

Tie a yellow ribbon 'round the old oak tree... I'm sure you've heard the song but what does the yellow ribbon represent? Yellow ribbon is dedicated to women and men who have served away from home in the United States; otherwise, it is also a colour of hope and it stands for suicide prevention, Down's Syndrome and bladder cancer.



### Red Ribbon

The colour of blood, anger, pressure, passion and love, the red ribbon frequently makes its appearance throughout the year as it represents numerous health and social concerns including World AIDS Day (make sure you wear yours on December 1). The red ribbon also represents Epidermolysis Bullosa (an inherited skin disease which causes the breakout of blisters), disaster relief, substance abuse, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) in the United States and World Heart Day (Sept 29) where we saw exhibitions and healthy activities such as the "walk-a-mile", last month.



### Indigo Ribbon

Take a firm stand against bullying, here is a ribbon dedicated to go against organised stalking and electronic harassment, an issue that could potentially invoke suicidal tendencies within your loved ones. The colour stands for togetherness, unity, infinity and eternity as the ribbon on the whole reflects a victim's peace and relief felt in brief moments.



### Pearl, White or Clear Ribbon

Despite your best efforts to stay away from cigarettes and smokers, no one is truly safe from the number one killer, lung cancer. The pearl, white or clear ribbon is a form of awareness and support to non-smokers who fall victim to lung cancer. The white ribbon is also used during World Human Rights Day to represent equality and fairness for all regardless of age, race, religion or creed.



### Grey Ribbon

Go grey in the month of May or June (June 8th is World Brain Tumour Day), the official colour used in representing brain cancer awareness. The grey ribbon is also seen to create awareness for other health issues such as asthma, Borderline Personality Disorder and diabetes (with a red blood drop placed at the centre of the ribbon). The colour also signifies the end of sex trafficking and sex slavery in the UK. But the latest to use the grey ribbon is the Zombie Research Society (US), as part of zombie awareness in the month of May! The grey or silver ribbon is also seen to create awareness of brain disorder or disability, severe depression, Parkinson's disease and Schizophrenia.

### Rainbow Ribbon

We tend to forget the simple act of wearing a ribbon could go a long way in the prevention of health and social issues, creating awareness, as well as to fight for equal rights that the rainbow ribbon indicates. Unlike the puzzle ribbon and many other ribbons such as the yellow red ribbon, we have been seeing the rainbow ribbon as far back when the red and pink ribbon existed. It is about time to put your head up high and be proud of who you are or show your support in fighting for equal rights for gays, lesbians, transsexuals and bisexuals.