

Feng Shui: The Way of Wind and Water – Some Introductory Tips

Feng shui can flummox the best of us, but it does not have to.

It is a combination of common sense and good taste, of intuition and logical thinking. "When you begin to perceive the power of the invisible world," writes William Spear, author of *Feng Shui Made Easy*, "you may very well explode, too -- with possibilities for a new future!"

Everything is connected. Say, for example, your sofa faces away from the room's entrance. This could begin making you jumpy and nervous...you snap at your spouse, which brings tension into your marriage. Perhaps, in response, you eat more and gain weight, which brings more tension into your relationship. This tension begins to affect how you do your job...which means you won't get a very good raise...which means you won't be able to afford a vacation with your family...which means...well, it goes on and on.

Feng shui is also a practice of cures for what ails an environment that is not working, and for those that must live or work in such an area, they often times discover a simple change can make a huge difference. Perfection notwithstanding, feng shui can give you a new outlook on a room that "feels off", but for some reason you never knew what was troubling about it.

You're already naturally practicing a lot of good feng shui; you just don't know it. Feng shui is a practice of harmony with nature and the environment. It's about yin and yang, balance and things we already do on some level, but we're not consciously aware of why we do them.

To quote Dan Santow, in *East Meets Nest*: "The ancient art of feng shui takes "location, location, location" to a whole new level." Promoting health and energy by auspiciously arranging and positioning different objects and furniture in your home and work space is not just a "new age" fix; this gift from the Chinese has been in practice by masters for at least five thousand years.

Some small fixes or cures to explore:

- Arranging furniture so you can face the doors while sitting.

- Making the environment much more comfortable by sitting away from drafts and adjusting lighting for the best possible "feel".
- Cleaning up clutter to assist in relaxation and help in finding things more easily.
- Widening the front path to your home to make it more inviting.
- Hanging a large mirror behind a stove so that you won't be surprised when someone comes up behind you or placing one at the end of a hallway so that it does not seem like a dead end.
- Making paths between and through rooms wide and easy to use, allowing for easy walking and promotion of chi (energy).
- Oiling door hinges so they don't squeak, reducing irritation.
- Adding colors or art to bring in desired energy. Adding trees, plants or upward lighting to raise energy and to soften hard corners and edges.

Mirrors are "the aspirin of feng shui" says Carol Mills, Feng Shui consultant in practice in Colorado. They can be used to create positive feng shui, to reflect good chi and deflect bad, correcting misshapen rooms. Make sure, however, that what is reflected is positive, and not the bathroom or garbage. Mirrors must also be kept clean and not cracked or chipped, or they will have the opposite effect from what you intend. Mirror tiles or strips of beveled mirrors break up images in too many disconcerting and confusing ways and should be avoided; stay away from smoked mirrors, too, or you'll be seeing yourself, as Spear writes, "amid the haze." Sliding mirrors on your medicine cabinet can be a nightmare, since the first image you'd have of yourself every morning would be split, creating an imbalance that would linger throughout your day.

To quote the unknown author at Starr-Rhapsody.com, using wind chimes will also cure bad feng shui, as they disperse bad chi, replacing it with good.

Mobles and weather vanes work the same way. Live plants and aquariums symbolize life; if plants and fish can thrive in a room, so can you. Be sure to discard any dead plants or cut flowers as the energy can be sapping and depressing.

Pictures hung too high imply you'll always be reaching for things; a lower position means that possibilities are endless.

Windows should open completely and not slide up and down, which will divide the energy flow and make you noncommittal. Narrow windows will make you narrow-minded and limit your opportunities.

Carefully placed heavy objects, such as statues and boulders, can stabilize an environment allowing you to maintain your cool under duress as well as hold onto your job or spouse.

Hung properly, a bamboo flute can lift the energy of a space, encouraging the positive flow of chi.

MAIN ENTRANCES

First impressions are important.

That means your home's main entrance -- the one you use most often, whether it's the front door or the door from the garage -- is the most crucial area in which to practice good feng shui, quoting the author at mostsuccess.com. The door should be wide enough to admit positive chi, with nothing in front, such as a shrub or statuette. It shouldn't face a window, or your home's chi will fly away as soon as you enter (bamboo blinds or draperies can be a helpful cure). The door should be sturdy and in good condition; a door that sticks means that you will feel frustrated and stuck, as well.

The first thing you see upon entering should not be a blank wall; that will slow down -- if not stop altogether -- the energy flow, and people will feel stuck, as if they are always running into a brick wall. Place a mirror on the wall, or a picture of a landscape or waterfall; this will breathe life and air into the space and prevent blockage of chi.

THE KITCHEN

The kitchen is often the center of family life, where food is prepared and eaten.

Fraught with chances for bad feng shui, most are easily cured. Your stove, which is symbolic of good fortune, since the food that sustains us is prepared there, should be positioned so that when you're cooking you can see who is entering the room. If it's not, place a mirror above it. The mirror does double duty, as it symbolically doubles the number of burners, which will increase health and prosperity, but again, this bears repeating, do keep it clean – a dirty mirror will cancel the effect of the cure.

Your sink and refrigerator shouldn't be next to the stove either, as that poses a conflict between fire and water, which can wreak all sorts of havoc. Speaking of the refrigerator, position it so it's not the first thing you see when walking into the kitchen. You will be drawn to it, possibly wanting to eat more, which in turn could cause unwanted weight gain.

THE BEDROOM

We spend so much time in the bedroom -- often naked and vulnerable -- and we especially want things to go well there.

Place the bed against a solid wall, not a window, so that when you are in it you feel safe and secure. The bed should never be directly in front of the door, with your feet facing out; that's how the dead are carried out.

A bed with rounded edges can encourage the flow of positive chi around it, while a squared-off bed will do the opposite. Pushing twin beds up against each other isn't such a hot idea, either, as it will bring division and strife into your relationship. Somehow, the comfort level seems to be severely compromised as well. So much of Feng Shui is simple common sense.

Try not to place a mirror in front of your bed, as the Chinese believe your soul leaves your body as you sleep and might be shocked by its own image. For obvious reasons, don't have a headboard that resembles a tombstone.

AROUND THE HOUSE

A few more quick tips: Round dining room tables symbolize heavenly blessings, and should have an even number of chairs around them (even numbers being a sign of good luck). And never have only one chair, as that's a clear-cut symbol of loneliness. In fact, if you're single and you want to stimulate the energy of relationships and marriage, place pairs of objects in your house -- two candlesticks or two photos, for example.

Stairways that face the front door imply that energy is flowing right out the door every time you enter.

Surround yourself with beautiful pictures depicting nature or the open seas or birds in flight, all of which will encourage good feng shui. Abstract art without a focus, writes Spear, "will create an environment in which the occupants may find it difficult to complete things."

Just as it is important for your home to have a positive energy flow, it's equally important for your office or work cubicle. There's a reason the big kahuna in the corner office has his or her desk far from, and yet facing, the door. It implies power and authority, while allowing for the broadest view of who is entering. A desk should face out from a wall, acting as a protector, but still allow for a view out the window. If placed up against a wall, the desk will block your flow of energy, while one too near the doorway will suggest that you leave early (even if you don't), which will encourage your colleagues to think of you as irresponsible. If your space is so small that you can't move your desk, use a mirror strategically placed to allow you to relax, confident that no one will enter and startle you. A mirror will also draw your guest's attention before they see you, lessening the effect of your desk being so near a doorway.

A cluttered office indicates a cluttered mind (Spear says it's even a reflection of a clogged intestinal system), so those weeks-old piles in your in-box will make you feel overwhelmed and unable to get out from the mountain of work. Rounded desks are best for those for whom being creative is important, harder edges for those in moneymaking positions.

To aid in any feng shui placement of what goes where successfully, practitioners use the BaGua. Based on the ancient Chinese oracle of the I Ching, it offers a primitive map for harmonious placement.

As a starting point, two excellent books with easy-to-decipher bagua maps and fabulous insight into how Feng Shui works are William Spear's *Feng Shui Made Easy* and Terah Kathryn Collins's *The Western Guide to Feng Shui*. Both books offer a fine introduction to this ancient art.

For 5,000 years people have attempted to understand feng shui, and masters devote their lives to it. Here are some more website links on the subject for your perusal:

[Wind and Water](#)

Real-estate advice for the 21st century.

[Feng Shui Mail-Order Items from Bartlett Designs](#)

Master Stanley Bartlett's site is most helpful, and includes a bagua, which is an excellent resource; you may print it for instant use, prior to getting your library of Feng Shui started.

This article compliments of Susan B. Killian, Life Coach, who can be reached at www.coachforyourlife.com