

## The Feng Shui Solution for Creating “Downtime”

Summer is almost here and so is patio living, picnicking and barbecuing. It's all about relaxation in the great outdoors so you can absorb some of that great fresh air and relax. All you need is outdoor space that provides enough peace and quiet to give you the opportunity to rest, read a book and step out of the fast lane.

Life changes for almost everyone when summer arrives. The tendency is to live and eat outdoors more. There are fewer scheduling conflicts because children are out of school. Shopping and running errands take less time because they can be done at times when fewer people are at the store so more time is gratefully spent on your patios, around your pools and in your sunrooms.

Summer graciously provides you more daylight hours so you can enjoy the slower pace of life that comes with the heat. In order to make sure you maximize the relaxation time you spend in your backyard with family and friends, or in a quiet corner by yourself, there are a few steps you can do to ensure that your patio area, lanai or backyard is filled with slowly meandering energy rather than zooming through - reminding you of all of the things you have left undone.

### Unclutter to Unwind

Even in the backyard, or on the patio, clutter is still enemy No. 1. Clutter is just as much of a problem on the outside of your home as it is on the inside. Pick it up, clean it up, organize it and toss anything that is broken, no longer useable or you simply no longer love. It provides you more positive energy to have fewer things that you really love than too many things you have by default and are giving you negative energy.

Everything in your life provides you either positive or negative energy. The objective of Feng Shui is to surround yourself with as much positive energy as possible by eliminating the negatives that drags you down.

### Create Relaxing Energy

**FIRST:** Surround yourself with the relaxing sounds of cool refreshing water. Even if you have a pool in your backyard, the sound of a waterfall is extremely peaceful, refreshing and cooling. You can use anything from a simple small tabletop self-contained waterfall to a large elaborate structured waterfall made of rocks surrounded with beautiful flowers and tropical plants where the water cascades down several drops dancing and singing over the rocks.

The size of the waterfall is not as important as the sound. If you have neither the budget nor the space, invest in a couple of waterfall or bubbling stream CDs or MP3 downloads and play them in a constant loop whenever you are in your relaxation zone. You can even play the sounds of the surf or waves breaking on the beach which is guaranteed to lull you to sleep on a lazy weekend.

Add to your peaceful setting the sound of wind chimes that tinkle and dance in the breeze. You can also add a bamboo wind chime to further the tropical island relaxing sounds.

**SECOND:** Invest in a couple of cool and very comfortable sets of clothing that you wear only on those days when you want to ignore the world and you really want the world to ignore you. By wearing this clothing only on the days you will be completely relaxing your body, you are programming your mind to immediately drop into a stress

free relaxation mode when you put these clothes on. Your mind will associate the clothing with the warm weather, the soothing sounds of the water and self absorbing leisure.

Some days you may wish to relax but your brain has a mind of its own and wants to keep pulling you back to reality. In such situations, the clothing you have dedicated for wearing only at times of significant relaxation will help bridge the gap from reality to “downtime”.

**THIRD:** Another great way to create a relaxing patio, lanai, pool or sunroom is the use of color. Most people are tempted to use really bright cheerful summery colors in such areas but for the most part those are all really high energy colors, not quiet restful peaceful ones. The best colors to use for a relaxing leisure area are the cool colors like blues, greens and teals. Think of the cool colors of a lake, a bubbling stream or the ocean and the wonderful array of lush greens, aqua and the wide variety of blues. These colors are calming as well as cooling on those hot lazy days of summer.

Purchase the majority of your patio furniture cushions in a range of these colors to maintain that cool relaxed feeling. Earth tones and natural colors are a very contemporary design in the marketplace today so if that is what you like then accessorize with the cool colors to reinforce the very reason you wish to spend time in your “downtime” zone – rest and relaxation.

It doesn't take a lot of work nor much money if you simply organize your thinking around the idea that your patio, lanai, pool area or sunroom are to be used for relaxing, getting rid of stress and “downtime,” not to store stuff and clutter. After preparing it for rest and relaxation, all you need to do is plan ahead; as you replace cushions and accessories, think cool, comfortable and relaxing. Be sure to include beverage service and outdoor dinner ware when purchasing cool color accessories.

“Downtime” is important for all of us as we live in a world that is high pressure, stressful and invasive. Forget the television, replace the noise pollution with the relaxing sounds of a waterfall and kick back in a stress free environment right in your own backyard.

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Pat Heydlauff, president of Energy Design, helps people eliminate chaos and stress at home and within oneself. As a consultant and speaker, Pat uses color, design and organization principles to transform clients' lives. Her proven methods remove clutter and disorder, while enhancing personal growth, improved relationships, prosperity, and joy. Her new book, "Feng Shui: So Easy a Child Can Do It," provides changes that lead to personal success and abundance. For information on her consulting, speaking and artwork, visit: [www.Energy-by-Design.com](http://www.Energy-by-Design.com) or call: 561-799-3443.