

Use feng shui to make your space a positive place

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In the fall, Carolyn Thomas changes the runner on her coffee table, lights pumpkin and cinnamon scented candles and adds red accents to her bedroom.

It's all to bring more energy to her home. "Instead of having those winter doldrums where you don't want to get out of bed in the morning, those changes will help you be more energized," says Thomas, a feng shui consultant in Orlando, who has clients in Brevard. "It's to keep your mood up, to keep you peppy." It may sound a bit New Age-ish, but feng shui consultants say the Chinese concept can lift your spirits, especially as the days get shorter. Feng shui is using positive energy in your personal space or work environment to bring about a desired result, according to Pat Heydlauff, of Jupiter, author of "Feng Shui: So Easy a Child Can Do It." She said the result can be more happiness and less stress and chaos in your home and improved focus, productivity and prosperity in the workplace. "The more positive energy you bring in your home, the happier you will be and the more successful you will be at whatever you choose to do with your life," she says. Here's a room-by-room guide to bringing good energy into your home:

In the bedroom

The room needs to be clutter free. This includes the closets (if it doesn't fit, look great on you or make you feel like a million dollars, get rid of it, Heydlauff says), and under the bed. "In feng shui, it is recommended that there is no TV in the bedroom," Riitta Ylonen, feng shui consultant, interior designer and owner of Finn Design Inc. in Melbourne, says in an e-mail. "However, if there is one, it should be concealed behind doors or covered for the night." For the best energy location, the bed should be as far away from the entrance to the door as possible, so you can see the door when you are in bed, Heydlauff says. She says the foot of the bed should never point out the door because it drains energy. Green plants that reach upward will "energize the concept of health, wealth and growth," in the room, she says. She also recommends putting a bud vase with two live or silk flowers - the same size and color - on the night table. One represents "you the person," the other is the "beautiful person within," she says. In terms of lighting, use table lamps and floor lamps as opposed to the overhead. "It gives the room ambience," says Janice Sugita, an interior designer and feng shui consultant in Beverly Hills, Calif. "You don't want the feeling of being in a classroom." For fragrance, go with a clean linen or soft perfume, she suggests.

In the kitchen

Declutter and organize the kitchen. For example, potholders and cooking utensils should be near the stove, Heydlauff says. "It speeds you up so you can actually rest and relax so you can reflect on those warmer days that are now starting to go away," she says. In the kitchen, there should be general lighting in the form of recessed cans or other ceiling light fixtures, preferably controlled separately from other lights with a dimmer switch, Ylonen says. To lift the energy, keep a bowl of fresh fruit or a basket of fresh vegetables on the counter, Heydlauff suggests. Sugita recommends putting up spontaneous black and white images of your family eating together. "White mats and a skinny black frame, and that brings mood to your kitchen," she says. "It brings pleasure." The odor in the kitchen should be fresh and clean, she says. She recommends citrus. "It's a good masking odor, but it smells natural and healthy."

In the dining room

The room - the table too - should be free of clutter, Heydlauff says, "so that you feel spacious like in the outdoors and can relax while you are enjoying your meal." A round table is ideal for encouraging conversation and feelings of togetherness, Ylonen says. She says the dining room also is a good place for a mirror. In feng shui, a mirror is considered to "duplicate" a festive meal and social gathering, she says. Keep the room well lit and bright to avoid overeating and feeling down, Heydlauff suggests. And bring some outdoor energy inside with bright flowers to lift your spirits, she says.

In the living room/ family room

Earth colors in this room are good for creating relationships and making the family feel stable, Heydlauff says. "If the room were white walls and black leather furniture with chrome arms, that would be a very unfriendly, unwelcoming room." Bring some light to the room with Torchiere lamps, which are good for emulating the light in the sky, she says. She says brighter outdoor colors in the form of throw pillows and art pieces will also bring a cheerful energy to the room. Heydlauff suggests creating a vision board with your favorite summer pictures and goals of what you hope to do in the fall or winter, such as a photo of someone skiing. "All these things will keep you focused on the positive energy and not let any mood swings even have room to enter your life," she says.