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Open House

USE THE FUNDAMENTALS OF FENG SHUI
TO BRING TRANQUILITY INTO YOUR HOME

By KYM ALLISON BACKER

It took centuries for the practice of feng shui to reach the United States back in the 1980s. And like leg warmers and shoulder pads, interior decoration inspired by an ancient Chinese philosophy seems like a thing of the past.

But it can't hurt to revisit a theory such as feng shui, especially if the results give you a much-needed boost to start the New Year right. ➔

A quick refresher: Feng shui is a method of design used to bring balance and peace into a space by ensuring that rooms are set up for the best flow of energy. In addition to the careful planning of one's living area, certain elements including wood, metal and water are used to bring harmony between the inside and the outside of our homes—and our minds.

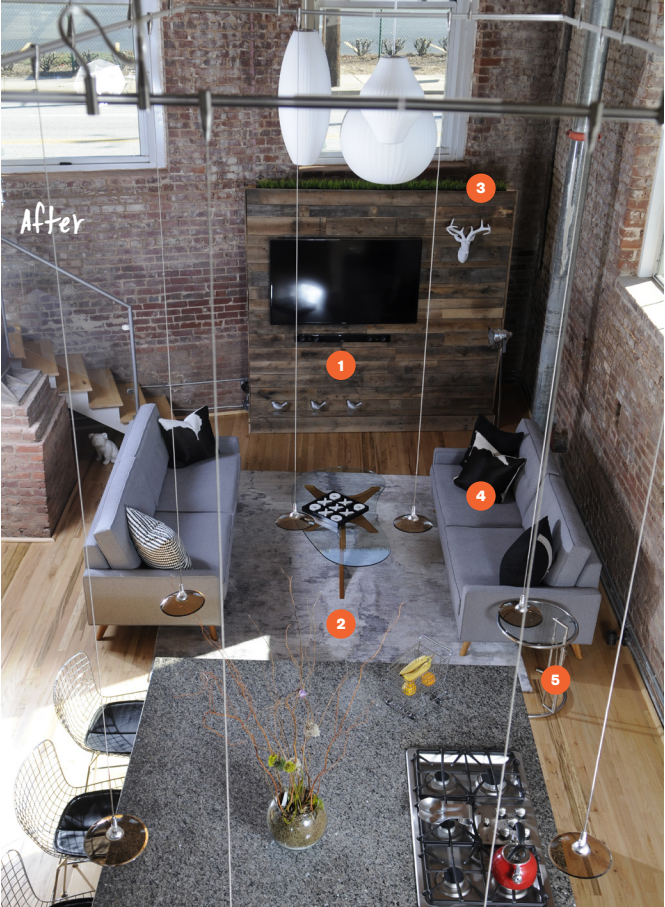
Although the concept has undergone a few incarnations since its origins more than 5,000 years ago, the founding principle of feng shui remains the same: to create a calm environment that promotes your happiness and well-being.

You already know how good it feels when you bring plants into the living room or declutter your bedroom and keep the space as serene as possible. What once seemed New Age and hokey is now second nature for most of us. Why not go back to basics? Adopting a few new ways to bring positive energy into your home doesn't necessarily require a major overhaul and you can control how far you want to go—whether it's new furniture, a complete color change or just some strategically placed pillows.

As with yoga, juicing, aerobics and tai chi, feng shui is an idea that will never completely go out of fashion. It's there when you need to rediscover it because it's simple and inexpensive to implement, the start of the year is a perfect time to give it a try.

Interior designer Iesia King of Atlanta-based iK Design Group applies her expertise when creating symmetrical spaces for her clients. But she reminds us that there are basic rules anyone can utilize when considering the layout of our rooms. "The first and most important step is space planning," says King. "Find the best setup for each room that allows the chi to flow freely."

Ready to shake things up in your abode? King offers examples of how to transform the look and the flow of energy in your residence with a few simple tips:



LOFT LIVING ROOM

This is a very modern example of feng shui. The monochromatic color scheme helps bring out the lines of the midcentury furniture, and the introduction of metal into the space also makes the style feel updated. Loft living is amazing, but it can be challenging because the buildings weren't initially constructed for residential living. This particular living room has an irregular shape because there are no straight walls. In feng shui, sharp corners and angles are a no-no, so the first step was to solve that issue.

→ **1.** The homeowner built a custom entertainment center made of reclaimed lumber, which introduced wood, one of the key feng shui components. **2.** I moved the unit toward the angled wall and positioned the rug to sit in front of the entertainment center to create a rectangle. Once symmetry was established, I began to introduce the different components that promote vital energy into a room. **3.** Plants were placed on top of the entertainment center to bring nourishment; **4.** the black-and-white pillows provided stillness to the space. **5.** Last, metal was represented by the floor lamp, the side tables and also the color gray, which is the primary color of the rug.



Feng Shui Do's and Don'ts

Do:

- 1. Create a square** or a rectangle with an area rug and arrange your furniture in line.
- 2. Make sure your back** isn't facing the door in any room. You want to feel as if you're in control and can protect your household.
- 3. Introduce plants** into your space to keep the energy nourished.
- 4. Work in areas** with a lot of natural light, and open the windows to allow the positive chi the sun brings to enter the room—and to let the stale energy escape.

Don't:

- 1. Position your bed** under a window. In feng shui, it's said that this allows your energy to leave through it. When possible, place the bed against a solid wall.
- 2. Place a mirror** right across from your front door. The entrance is the mouth of your home, where good and bad vibes come from. If a mirror faces the front door, it bounces the energy back outside your house.
- 3. Soften sharp corners** and angles. You can smooth out existing sharp edges in your space with objects such as plants or bowls.

-KAB

LOFT BEDROOM

The sleeping quarters are a key space when it comes to peace of mind. Most of us spend more time there than in any other room, and it's where rest—our most critical self-renewal activity—takes place. When you wake up, it's important to feel rejuvenated and refreshed, so I wanted to create a place that was peaceful and romantic. To bring harmony into this bedroom, I used every component of feng shui.

→ **1.** To begin, when you enter, the eye is immediately drawn to the focal point of the room, the white paneling behind the bed. The movement of the textured decor is similar to water, which can calm your spirit even if you don't consciously realize it. **2.** Next, the gray upholstered bed is positioned in the center of the room. **3.** To balance the metal legs, wooden nightstands were introduced and positioned equal distances between the bed and the walls. **4.** Bed linens are just as important as the furniture you select for your room. Here, white and lavender colors were chosen. **5.** In feng shui, lavender



encourages energy and passion so we made sure to add the feeling of earth through the use of fresh calla lilies and orchids.



TRADITIONAL LIVING ROOM

Understanding exactly what's preventing good feng shui in a room is important in achieving harmony. In this space, the energy was being pulled to one side of the room. Remember, it's all about trying to establish equilibrium; a balanced room supports a balanced mind.

→ **1.** Initially, the television was positioned in the corner, draining the energy to the right side of the room, and the sofa was positioned with its back toward the door, which obstructed the flow of good energy. By removing the television, we created one focal point, the fireplace, which became the centralized part of the room. **2.** The combination of the yellow and orange fire colors will get energy circulating. And



having metal in a room is said to make you more efficient, precise and to grant more clarity. **3.** Repositioning the sofa to be in line with the love seat was essential. The goal is always to make a room more open, which allows the energy to flow. **4.** Last, the idea of earth was introduced through the use of the sand-colored pillows, which bring stability into the room.

