

How To Decorate Using Feng Shui Principles

By Walter Ford

Feng Shui (pronounced “fung shway”) is Chinese for “wind and water,” and it’s the latest trend in home decorating. Though Feng Shui is actually an ancient Chinese discipline stretching back thousands of years, the modern interpretation takes some of the basic philosophy about harmony, balance and nature and incorporates it into various dictums around room design and object placement. Some of these dictums make a certain amount of common sense. Others derived from when Feng Shui was used to select palace and burial sites for royalty and landed gentry and which promise benefits in romance, career and money, well, you might want to take these with a grain of salt. If you’re thinking of redecorating a room or building a home and would like to take Feng Shui into account, do some reading on the subject beforehand and talk to a number of different consultants to find out what interpretation of Feng Shui suits you best. There are even computer programs that explain and utilize Feng Shui principles to help you design and lay out your home.

Basically, Feng Shui is about flow – the free flow of positive energy through a space, the ability of negative energy to leave a space, not allowing negative influences to be trapped in certain areas and ensuring that positive influences remain in those areas. Sound complicated? It’s not, really. Basically, Feng Shui deals with squares and rectangles – that breakfast nook or sleeping alcove you’ve been planning could throw off the balance and harmony. While your Feng Shui practitioner can tell you more, each home is divided into nine areas with the baseline being the entrance or front door. In other words, you might want to locate your home office in the “wealth” area or, if you’re starting a home pie-baking business, you might be happy to know your kitchen is in the “career” area of your home.

Feng Shui also has to do with the placement of decorative elements. For example, a statue of Rodin’s “The Lovers” might just be the perfect thing to place in your “Love/Marriage” area -- that’s back, and to the right of, the front door. You might want to place some token of acknowledgement of each Feng Shui area in the appropriate spot in your home -- keep that Mason jar full of loose change in your wealth area and your encyclopedia in your wisdom and knowledge area. There are also various less literal minded ways of symbolizing the energy you’re trying to enhance in areas of your home. For example, the color red is a highly energetic and positive color. Mirrors and glass reflect and refract energy throughout a space.

Though using a professional Feng Shui practitioner is strongly recommended, here are some other interesting Feng Shui decorating tips:

- Red represents strength, warmth, and energy. But you can have too much of a good thing. Too much red may make a room, and what happens in it, volatile.
- In your bedroom, place objects in pairs – to signify you want to have a lasting, loving marriage. Don't have anything in threes – that signifies something else entirely. If you find that you're fighting a lot, remove or cover mirrors because they just magnify bad energy.
- For all you lonely guys and gals out there, if you want to attract a partner, pull that bed out from the wall -- you need to be able to get to it from two sides.
- If you've been having a lot of health problems, look at that area (the left middle from the front door or the center left of a room) and see what's there. Is it a messy closet, a cluttered bureau, or maybe where you keep the garbage? Clearing these areas out and restoring order may just restore your health as well – and it certainly couldn't hurt.
- Men, another good reason for shutting the toilet lid when you're done is that if you don't, you're likely to be “tossing money down the drain.”
- In general, clutter in Feng Shui is bad news; too much furniture or decoration can confuse energies and restrict the flow of opportunities in life, love and career.
- Keep the area in front of your front door as clean and harmonious as you can. This is career central and, in general, you need energy to flow into your home unimpeded by knick-knacks.
- Colors in your career center are black and blue – a blue and/or black floor or rug can help opportunities flow through your door like water.

Though Feng Shui may seem a bit strange, it's surprising how many of even the oddest sounding suggestions have a basis in good common sense. Keeping balance, harmony, perspective and simplicity as watchwords of your life and how you decorate your home are always good ideas. If having red plants lining your sidewalk makes you feel as though you'll be more successful in your career, well, perhaps you will be. It's certainly worth a try.