

HOME IMPROVEMENT

Whether you're home for the holidays, home to escape the maddening crowds, or merely getting ready to hunker down for the dark cold months ahead, a few simple decorating tweaks in your home can improve your outlook and perhaps, even your health. New York City architect and Feng Shui expert Alex Stark explains...

BEDTIME STORIES

According to the principles of Feng Shui, the bedroom plays a vital role in determining the quality of relationships and is where the politics of a partnership or marriage are worked out. It also plays an important role in health and recuperation. Position your bed's back against a wall that's diagonally opposite the door so you can see the room's entrance when you are lying down. If your feet point toward the door, place a table, screen or hanging crystal between the door and the bed. Kinkiness aside, mirrors in the bedroom can actually drain potency. If you can't move your looking glass to another room be sure you can't see yourself in its reflection when you are lying down. Otherwise, restlessness, poor sleep and loss of performance can result.

KITCHEN AIDS

The kitchen is considered one of the most powerful rooms in the home and can enhance both health and wealth. To help it work its magic, go for oval or rounded cabinet and furniture shapes rather than sharp and angular ones, which are referred to as "poison arrows," since they create negative energy. If the wall corners or other architectural features are on the pointy side, try softening them with plants, draped



fabric or round moldings. Lucky energy lines, it is believed, travel in a curved, wandering pattern.

BATHROOM HABITS

If your bathroom faces the front door or is adjacent to your bedroom, combat the negative energy this can cause by keeping the bathroom door closed at all times. And since a bathroom at the end of a long corridor can supposedly affect the entire family's biological systems, especially reproduction, "shorten" the hallway by dividing it into sections using architectural details or by hanging curtains, mobiles, fabrics, or chimes.

FINE DINING

To promote good digestion and an overall sense of well-being, Stark advises keeping your dining room bright and cheerful but without any loud or excessive decoration. "You want the space to be a calm one," he says. He also recommends

not using the dining table to do housework or conduct business. "Eating is a sacred activity and should be treated as such," he says.

HUE NEW

They may be viewed as sophisticated neutrals but dull flat colors such as gray or beige can crush creativity and make you sluggish. This effect can be minimized by decorating with flowers, bright art, rugs, or pictures.

Some other color cues to keep in mind:

- Soft greens and blues calm nerves and lower voices
- Yellows energizes creativity
- Soft blues or purples spur imagination and deep thinking
- Greens encourages concentration
- Soft yellows, oranges, and peaches motivate
- Red revs

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