

Feng shui

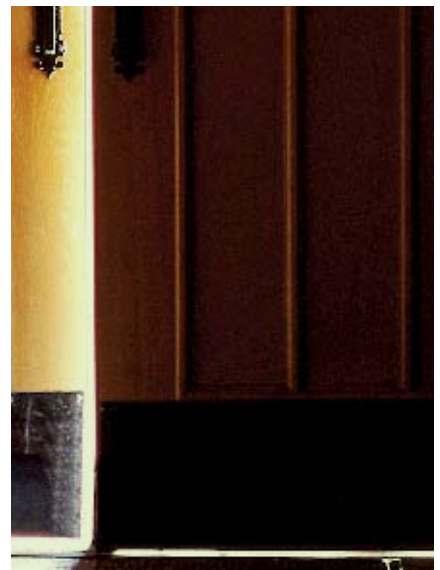
When *Kate Johnston* decided to be her own feng shui guinea pig, powerful changes occurred.

I try to be a 'practise what you preach' person. So I decided the only way to test feng shui (pronounced 'fung-schway') was to apply it to my home. The upsurge of energy I've since felt has convinced me that there's something in it.

Feng shui is the Chinese art of placing things large and small – roads, houses, rooms and possessions – in harmony with nature, so that nothing feels wrong or uncomfortable. It allows energy to flow easily around us and our possessions. This then releases the personal energy we were using to navigate that awkward or lacklustre environment.

In ancient China, feng shui masters were believed to have the power to manipulate wind and water ('wind and water' is what the words 'feng shui' actually mean). You may not need such powers, but the effects of making a few changes in your home or office do carry over into other areas of your life. But, I hear you say, can installing an aquarium really bring more money into my life? Now that I'm a believer, I say, try it and see.

Maybe deep down you know something in your bedroom, office or hallway doesn't feel right – that painting or the candleholder which was a gift from your brother you've felt obliged to display. The feng shui way is to not have anything around that you don't absolutely love.



Quick fix

It's simpler than I thought to apply the basic principles. These three feng shui quick fixes will kick-start the process.

- clear clutter
- repair or replace broken objects
- neutralise negative or dull feelings in

a room by redirecting or reflecting energy, or shifting things around.

When it comes to clearing clutter, be prepared for resistance to change. It took some deep breathing but once I started throwing out, there was no stopping me. Whether or not feng shui would bring money or love into my

for non-believers

life became secondary to the intense satisfaction I got from fixing the broken chair, throwing out ancient underwear and dumping that vase I should never have bought.

Why was I holding onto things I hadn't used or enjoyed in years? I struggled with the 'but it might come in handy one day' syndrome. I was sentimental about things I hadn't even looked at for five years. Then I realised many objects reminded me of rotten times. Why did I keep *them*?


Apart from clearing clutter, I took a walk around my house and noted the areas where I felt uplifted plus others that left me feeling flat or nothing at all. If flat, one can create energy with objects – plants liven dark corners well. If full of energy, pare back and pare back again. I was surprised how minimalist I could get. It was as if I'd previously felt obliged to display everything I owned.

But it was the positioning of furniture where feng shui worked best. I'd never been happy with the position of my desk. Feng shui advises to sit at your desk

(and the same applies to your bed), then make sure the doorway is in clear line of sight and that there is a view of as much of the room as possible. I couldn't see how this would work but when I put the desk diagonally across the corner furthest from the door looking out over the whole room – it was perfect. A number of people have since walked past the room, then instinctively gone back, looked in and said, 'What a lovely room'.

The bagua grid

The art of feng shui has many layers, and only a trained consultant will have the subtle knowledge and awareness to apply it fully. One simple thing you can do is to place the bagua grid (see below) upon the floor plan of your home. Then choose one part of your life – relationships, wealth, career – that you want to change and apply the three feng shui quick fixes to the corresponding area.

I'm yet to buy that aquarium. But I obeyed feng shui, took the painting of a solitary woman from my relationships area and a few months later things have definitely improved in that direction. Oh yes, I'm a believer. 

The bagua grid

Wealth Abundance Ability to receive	Fame Reputation	Marriage Partnerships
Family Ability to initiate Health	Health and balance Area affects entire home	Children Creativity Ability to complete things
Self-understanding Knowledge Learning	Career Communication Social connection	Helpful friends and travel Support network
Align this side with your main entry		

What worked for me

- Office – moved the desk from in front of a window to diagonally across a corner looking out.
- Bedroom – moved the bed so that it wasn't against the same wall as the door. Made sure the bed was not directly opposite the window or door.
- Cleared dressing gowns, bags etc. from behind doors. Made sure there was nothing for doors to bang into when fully opened.
- Moved mirrors if what they reflected wasn't positive or relevant to that area of the bagua grid.
- Replaced a picture of a single person in the relationship area with an image of two people.
- Cut away trees and plants overhanging the pathway and entrance to my home.
- Put a tall plant in a corner where empty space seemed dull.

→ MORE

Two books with easy instructions on how to apply feng shui to your home or office are:

Little book of Feng Shui, New Dawn Press, RRP \$11.95

Clear your clutter with Feng Shui by Karen Kingston, Judy Piatkus Publishers, RRP \$24.95

The Association of Feng Shui provides a list of qualified consultants and advice on how to choose a consultant.

Web www.afsc.org.au