

HOME HELP.

Do you sleep under a beam or facing the door? If so, you could be issuing an open invitation to misfortune. Hugh St Clair explores the benefits of Feng Shui

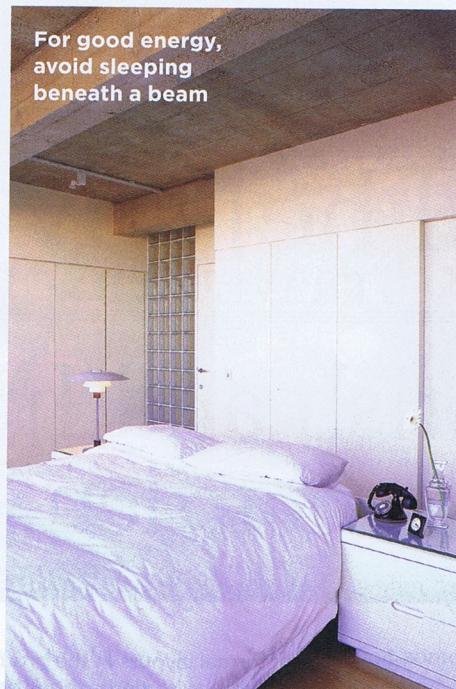
Can you blame good or bad fortune for the arrangement of your furniture and untidy home? Millions of Chinese and a growing number of interior designers here do. They believe in Feng Shui and the power of the Chi which is good energy. A place has Sheng Chi when all those who dwell in it are prosperous and happy. Much of Feng Shui makes obvious sense – don't acquire clutter, use natural materials and incorporate plants into your home.

However, there are some other things that most of us are not consciously aware of. For instance, if there is a door at the end of a dark corridor, put a mirror above it to attract good energy. Keep hallways and corridors clear to allow good energy to flow. Those with more adventurous interior design taste could place six red fish and one black in a tank in alignment with a window to repel bad vibes.

Experts will say that the placing of your bed is the most important decision to make in the home. You should not sleep facing a door; this symbolises death as corpses are removed feet first. Beds under sloping eaves cause depression. Sleeping under a beam generates bad energy (Sha), so you should suspend something from it to ward off the negative force.

So where can you put a bed if the room isn't naturally light and spacious and in the attic? That is where things get rather more complicated and further reading is required. Try *The Feng Shui Bible* by Simon Brown. It appears to be about dates of birth and compasses and translating them via charts. In simple terms, it seems

For good energy, avoid sleeping beneath a beam



that the bed should face diametrically opposite the door – so if the door faces Northeast, the bed should face South or Northwest. Moving downstairs, Brown says you should avoid sitting close to a door, a sharp protruding corner, facing a wall or a large window.

Sarah McAllister is a Feng Shui Master and maintains that learning Feng Shui from books just skims the surface. She offers two-day courses for £180 plus VAT 'to guide you through the myths and misconceptions of the art, so you can achieve clarity on how to help yourself at home'. She will also visit your home, for

a fee of £500 for an average house and garden, including a detailed report.

Those whom Sarah has visited, say that she can 'feel' bad spirits in the home. One client reported that she brought with her a Bhutanese bowl, which she banged, and some bags of salt. It is believed that sea salt in the Northeast and Southwest corners of the home add greater stability to the flow of chi. Sarah says that to gain a very simplistic understanding of how Feng Shui applies to your house, you can divide your floor plan into eight directions, with a nine-square grid or a pie chart.

Establish where North is and then fill in the following correspondences, starting from the North: Career, Northeast; Inner Knowledge, East; Elders/Ancestors, Southeast; Fortunate Blessings/Wealth, South; Fame/Illumination, Southwest; Relationships, West; Creativity and Helpful Friends, Northwest.

Sarah explains that a cluttered garage in Northeast can interfere with your ability to understand yourself. Apparently, a professional consultation will fine-tune the property to 64 different areas, offering a sort of 'acupuncture for space'.

Am I actually convinced? What I have researched has got me thinking and I am certainly going to go around my house to assess the layout. I will tidy up, too. ♦

THE FENG SHUI BIBLE by Simon Brown is published by Octopus Books at £12.99

FENG SHUI AGENCY For a consultation by Sarah McAllister, call 0844-848 4099, or visit www.fengshuiagency.com

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Q Are specialist insurers expensive? I'm not sure it is worth the money.

A Our clients do tell us that basic policies on the internet are cheaper than some of the insurers we use. While true to an extent, the price difference is minimal, but the variations in standards are considerable. Cheaper insurers do not offer good value because their policies are not designed to individual needs. Once we have tailored a policy to the client's requirements, the premium is

close to what they were previously paying, and they are also getting better cover. Essentially, you get what you pay for – I find that once clients realise the benefits of a high-value insurer they do not want to revert to basic cover. If you have expensive items in your home, do you want to leave their protection to the cheapest in the market?



THE LADY PROMOTION

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