

KITCHENS: 8 Best Updates For Small Budgets

COUNTRY COLLECTIBLES PRESENTS #23

Decorating SOLUTIONS

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*your decorating
style is...*

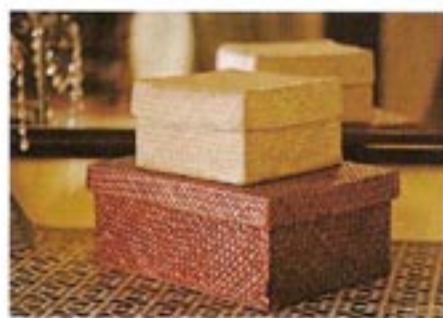
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FENG SHUI FOR SMALL APARTMENTS

Make your pint-sized home feel larger with these tips. BY LAURA BENKO



Above: To facilitate a spacious energy flow, store must-have items in clever ways, such as inside ottomans or decorative covered baskets like the ones shown here.

Left: One large-scale piece of furniture can create a dramatic focal point, especially when paired with a mirror above it.

Feng Shui is about energy and how it flows through a space. In a small apartment there are many Feng Shui decorating guidelines that can help you create the illusion of more space and enhance a feeling of expansiveness. By following basic Feng Shui principles of energy flow, natural cycles, organization and positioning, your undersized place can feel like a grander space in no time. To get started, try these tips.

1. Pare down, clear out and get organized. Clutter creates a stagnant flow of energy (or *chi*) throughout your home, which can lead to a cramped or confined feeling—no matter how big your home is. Start with one room at a time, considering each object or piece of furniture and asking yourself, “Do I love this?” and “Do I use it all the time?” Get rid of anything that does not lift your spirits. Surround yourself with only the items you absolutely love. As you go through this process, think about a positive affirmation, such as this one: “My home reflects who I am and supports my life, work and goals.”

2. Make changes with the seasons. Once you’ve pared down, try reducing even more items by rotating remaining collectibles with the change of seasons. By revolving your chosen objects in accordance with the cycles of the environment, you can harmoniously shift the energy in your home to create a cohesive atmosphere. This also creates the illusion of more space. A

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Make Your Home More Spacious Today

- Keep knick-knacks to a minimum on counters and tabletops. In Feng Shui, clean surfaces help us see life more clearly.
- Create more light by increasing bulb wattage or switching to vivid, full spectrum bulbs for “natural” light.
- Keep the air clean and circulating with a non-ozone releasing air purifier. If possible, leave a window or two slightly ajar. Homes with circulating air feel bigger than stagnant ones.
- Hang a crystal in the center of a room. Crystals are popular Feng Shui adjustments because they symbolically expand space and disperse dancing prisms of light.
- Limit your color palette to pale, cool colors (unless you are painting one wall a dramatic color to add depth).
- Avoid busy patterns on curtains, tablecloths and bedspreads.
- Bring a natural environment into your home through plants, window boxes, water fountains or rock gardens.
- Don’t get anything new unless you give something away.

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basic principle of Feng Shui teaches us that nature is in flux, yet cyclical, and humankind follows the same cyclical laws. Rotating your décor in accordance with nature will subconsciously enhance your own sense of balance in your home.

3. Add mirrors. Mirrors have been called the "aspirin of Feng Shui" because they can create space, bring in auspicious chi and allow good things like a beautiful view from outdoors to enter. They help negate the feeling of stuck energy, reflect light and limit the appearance of shadows. Their use in small spaces cannot be underestimated. When you choose a mirror, the larger it is, the better. However, be vigilant in observing what your mirrors are reflecting because that effect will be doubled in your home. Are you reflecting clutter and a pile of bills or a beautiful view?

4. Choose furniture with dual functions. Folding tables create extra space when not in use. Ottomans that open up for storage make it possible to stretch out on a couch and have extra seating when entertaining. Sometimes large-scale furniture (but just a few pieces) makes the best choice in a small room. It will draw the eye and create a focal point and the illusion of a bigger room. Small furniture does not necessarily make the room appear bigger.

5. Utilize the walls. Think vertical before horizontal. Choose wall mounted shelving and wheeled units rather than freestanding ones. Furniture that rolls allows for configurations that can change according to your needs. When positioning the bed and desk, arrange them so your back is against the wall and you can see the largest part of the room, including the door. This commanding position is considered auspicious and empowering, giving you a wide view of your surroundings and creating a feeling of expansiveness.

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a book. Visit www.BenkoFengShui.com.