

New Year's Home Makeover

Did you know that a fresh, clean home can give a huge boost to your New Year's resolutions? According to Feng Shui consultant Marie Diamond, the way we keep our home can either support or create obstacles to our success, happiness, and good fortune. It all has to do with chi, the free flow of good energy that makes a house or room feel inviting or off-putting. As the New Year kicks off, learn how to maximize the positive energy in your home with these tips on cleaning, organizing, and decorating.

Marie Diamond is an international consultant on feng shui, has advised thousands of clients, including many celebrities, on how to maximize the design of their home for happiness and success.

WHAT AFTER THE HOLIDAYS

CLEANING

Has the air in your post-holiday home suddenly gone stale? Does your house look a wreck from too many guests? Start your year off right by reclaiming your home and setting a good tone for the rest of the year. From wiping away the past to maximizing the sparkle, discover your home's inner chi with our seasonal cleaning tips and the expert feng shui advice from Marie Diamond.

1/Get energy flowing. If you've traveled over the holidays, the first thing to do upon arriving home, according to Marie Diamond, is to invite fresh energy in and get it circulating. Open the windows wide and let water run in sinks and showers to create a sense of moving *chi*. Resist turning the TV on instantly and, instead, fill your home with pleasant musical sounds.

2/ Clear the air. Winter homes with tightly closed windows can begin to smell stale. Eliminate odors from the old year with an air sanitizer good in any room of the house. According to Marie Diamond, lighting incense and purifying the air is also helpful, especially if you've had many parties or overnight guests.

3/Invite the light. Open the New Year to a clear view by keeping your windows immaculate. Sparkling clean windows maximize winter's dimming light and help keep seasonal depression at bay. To keep the house smelling fresh, use a nature-scented cleaner made especially for windows.

4/Maximize your sparkle. According to feng shui, crystal spreads energy through space so create a sparkling feel by cleaning all your crystal, including chandeliers. Remove everything from your china cabinet and clean all its contents, including the cabinet's windows, before putting back only the objects that you love.

5/Wipe away the past. Make a new start by cleaning up trails from the past. Electrostatically charged dust mitts are great for picking up dust, lint and hair from furniture and woodwork. Wipe doorknobs clean of fingerprints, and clean hinges, handles and locks according to the metal they are made from. Give your computer keyboard and screen a thorough cleaning, as well as telephones and fax machine.

6/Clarify your view. Make sure all your mirrors are shiny-clean. And, Marie Diamond says, check what is being reflected in the mirrors. Paintings opposite mirrors should reflect happy times. And don't sleep with an exposed mirror facing your bed. The same goes for TV and computer screens, which emit electromagnetic vibrations that can disturb sleep. If necessary, cover them with a cloth while you sleep.

7/Jump-start the future. Make of habit of emptying trash and garbage cans every night to begin each day with fresh energy in your home. As a New Year's gift to yourself, wash your garbage cans thoroughly out with a cleanser to cut down on germs, and resolve to do so once a month.

ORGANIZE YOUR CHAOS

Feng shui teaches how to live in harmony with your environment. And clutter is simply is not harmonious: it creates confusion, causes delays, and easily turns into chaos. Start the New Year off right, says expert Marie Diamond, by putting yourself on a clutter diet. By letting go of things you don't use anymore and organizing what you do, you can create a flow of positive energy that supports a happy household. Here's how.

1/ Clear the rubble. According to Marie Diamond, feng shui promotes the belief that golden opportunities come through your front door, so clear the pathway leading to it. Remove boxes and bags and make sure nothing is pointing toward incoming guests, like spiky plants.

2/Decide to declutter. You may not have time to declutter all your closets, but at least clean out *one*. Marie Diamond says, "The more space you create, the more positive flow can effortlessly come to you." Open the energy to a "new you" by discarding old clothes that don't fit and donate them to charity. If you haven't worn something in two years and it doesn't fit—move it on!

3/Embrace your desk. Whether at home or in the office, your desk is an extension of you. It's where you pay your bills, create new projects, and correspond with loved ones. Start the New Year off by filing papers, shelving books, organizing your accessories, and even declutter your computer's desktop.

4/Hang it up. The moment you take off a piece of clothing, make the habit of hanging it up or placing it away in a bureau. The more clothes that are left out, the more clothes they attract. And, organize shoes according to season. Spring and summer shoes should be

packed away; winter boots placed on the back porch to refrain from dirtying interior floors.

5/Tackle the news. Redefine publications such as newspapers, magazines, etc., as DISPOSABLES! Don't let them pile up. Create three boxes in your kitchen: one for interesting articles, one for recipes, and one for coupons. Then throw out the rest of publications on a daily basis.

6/Provide shelter. Every item in your house needs a place to live. Invest this month in new storage receptacles: accordion files for bills; mesh hanging cubes for laundry, toys, or stuffed animals; colorful dairy crates for magazines, shoes, clothes, and tools. Be creative in how you store your collectibles.

DECORATE

The philosophy of feng shui respects all aspects of an environment: from the placement of furniture to the interrelationship of colors, scents, textures, and symbols. The underlying principle is always harmony and graciousness. A gracious home allows everyone—from friends and family—to feel all is right with the world. Whether you want to soothe ruffled feathers or ensure a good night's sleep, explore these decorating tips from feng shui consultant Marie Diamond.

1/Enrich your life. If you've enjoyed exotic travels over the holidays, create a bridge between your vacation and your "real life" with exotic scents that remind you of your trip. That way the good energy of your vacation will stay with you much longer. Find a scent that matches your visited locale, such as a mountain alpine scent or a tropical fruit aroma.

2/Empower your good fortune. Create new movement into your life and home by hanging symbol of welcome on your front door. Feng shui consultant Marie Diamond suggests: If your front door faces north, east, or southeast, decorate with a bubbling fountain or blue ornaments; if your door faces northeast, south, or southwest, decorate with candles or red, purple, rose, or yellow ornaments. If your door faces north or northwest, place a wind chime nearby or decorate with white gold or silver.

3/Treat yourself royally. If you regularly enter your home through a side or back door, give it a beauty treatment by planting lush plants or flowers nearby. This way, you will always feel as if you are entering your "castle" as a king or queen, no matter which door you enter.

4/Soothe the soul. Refresh your home this season by adding a new scent. Marie Diamond says that the scent of lavender helps release energies from the past and creates a

welcoming embrace for guests. Clean your house with lavender-scented products and let the air become a garden of lavender with sachets and dried bundles.

5/Ensure good dreams. Invest in new luxurious sheets for the New Year and make sure your bedroom is clean and dust-free. Plus, reconsider the artwork you hang in the room. According to Marie, it is important to hang above your bed what you most want to dream about. If you want more romance in your life, hang a romantic picture. Avoid pictures of water, heavy rocks, or mountains above the bed, and most of all, never hang anything depressing; happy images create happy dreams.

6/ generate love. In the dead of winter, maximize your fireplace to generate more warmth and kinship in your family. Marie Diamond suggests sprinkling few drops of essential oil on a log before burning, such as sandalwood, cinnamon, orange, rose, lemon, or rosemary. If the fireplace is at the center of your house, add a still water element like a bowl with floating candles or water plants to ease tension between family members and stabilize finances. Scented candles placed where people socialize act like magnets. Give new life to relationships by making sure framed photos house the most recent pictures of friends and family. AND PLACE THEM OUT