



Feng shui the season

This time of year often comes with chaos, but the ancient Chinese practice is all about harmony—in your life as well as your home

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY LISA FRANCHOT

The Eastern art of feng shui began with people observing nature and applying those observations to create cities and structures that fostered happiness, harmony, and prosperity. Over several thousand years, it came to influence the design of businesses and even homes. As a modern feng shui expert, I truly believe we can reach the same goals by applying its principles not only to our outer environment, but our inner lives as well. There's no better season than autumn to seek balance in both heart and hearth, especially when the coming holidays and all their commitments loom so large!

Make space

Each fall, the trees shed their leaves before winter sets in. They do this to draw water and nutrients inward to protect their core. They let go of their blossoms, leaves, and fruits, shedding everything that is no longer essential. What a great concept for moms to contemplate: Clearing space for just the essential elements you want to bring into your family's life.

In your home, this may mean decluttering and removing objects that no longer serve you. Fix or let go of things that are broken, and remove items that aren't beautiful, functional, or meaningful. Try a dietary cleanse; eating simpler meals prepares you for all of the rich and heavy foods you'll enjoy through the winter. And give yourself room to do what you enjoy. During the holiday season, we put a lot of energy outward—but nature reminds us to go inward and reconnect.



Decluttering makes room for what's important.



Clearing space helps you focus on the essential stuff—family!

THE NEW HOLIDAY TO-DO LIST

- Take time to do what you need to stay balanced.
- Enjoy a few minutes of quiet and relax your mind.
- Get a little exercise to sweat out toxins and keep your metabolism strong.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Breathe deeply!



Honor abundance

At harvest time the leaves change from green into royal colors—reds, oranges, purples, and golds—which symbolize abundance and prosperity. Why not teach kids about all the riches they have by encouraging them to share their abundance with others? Another way to show gratitude for your blessings is to decorate with these colors and incorporate them into your wardrobe.

TIP Explain to your kids that you're donating a box of something that matters to you—books, for example—to a nearby charity. Ask if they want to do the same with some of their clothes, toys, and games, as a way of sharing what they have.

Bring light

Feng shui is about creating balance. We do this naturally: When things get too warm, we open a window. If we get too tired, we rest. And during this season when days get shorter, it helps to literally and figuratively add light to our environment.

What do our holidays have in common? Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa all share the theme of adding light to the darkness. This may come from icicle lights, candles, oil lamps...or from our own hearts. My feng shui master is Hawaiian and he always spoke to me about the "Aloha Spirit," the concept of doing things with love. It is very similar to the Biblical idea of the Golden Rule. ●



TIP Embody the spirit of Aloha. Be the light in your world. When cleaning the house, put the feelings of love and joy and peace into everything that you do. As a family activity at dinner time, go around the table and list what you admire about each other. Send light toward those who seem stressed.



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Ariel Joseph Towne is a feng shui expert who transforms stagnant spaces into positive places. His clients include celebrities, families, single moms, and even businesses. Look for his new show this year on the Syfy channel and check him out at thefengshuiguuy.com.