

Feng shui

YOURSELF HEALTHY

Could decluttering be the secret to combating stress, insomnia or coughs that just won't go away? Emma Richardson finds out...

A tickly cough, a throbbing headache, a low mood... no one likes to feel below par. But what do you do when you've tried natural remedies and over-the-counter prescriptions, and your health complaint keeps coming back? According to feng shui practitioners, it could be a result of unbalanced energies in your home.

Feng shui is an ancient Chinese practice based on the idea that our environment is full of invisible, yet powerful, energy lines, some of which are auspicious and relate to good health, and others that cause misfortune and sickness. Advocates of feng shui believe that by carefully planning our surroundings, it is possible to promote positive energy and to balance the effect of negative forces – and consequently boost wellbeing, immunity and overall health.

And it seems there is truth in the saying that 'home is where the heart is' for it is here where an individual can be most affected. "In feng shui, every family member is represented by a particular part of the house," says feng shui consultant Priya Sher (priyasher.com), "so if there is a lot of clutter in the south-westerly rooms, for example, the principal woman of the household may feel tired or under the weather." In addition, each room corresponds to a different body organ: "Generally, the sitting room relates to the heart, the kitchen to the spleen, the bathroom to the kidneys, the bedroom to the lungs, and the dining room to the liver." By following feng shui practises in these areas, health complaints may be overcome and prevented.

Insomnia

According to the British Snoring and Sleep Apnoea Association (britishsnoring.co.uk), the average adult needs around seven hours of slumber a night – but, although all of us struggle to drift off from time to time, one third of the population suffers from insomnia, with one in 10 cases severe enough to have daytime consequences. "Every house has areas of active and quiet energy," says Priya. "Bedrooms benefit from being in a calm location. Notice how your body feels in each room. If you feel awake, use it as a study or living space, while a tranquil setting is the perfect place to set up your bed."

The best position is diagonally opposite the door, with the head facing northwards and against a solid wall. "This provides a sense of security and reduces the risk of cold drafts, which can have a negative effect on your sleep," says Priya. A head board is also a must: "Choose wooden or fabric-covered frames as opposed to metal, which conduct negative electromagnetics that can heighten fatigue," she recommends.

Bright colours and busy wallpapers should be replaced with pastel greens, lavenders and beiges, lighting should be dimmed, and electronic devices left in the sitting room: "So many of us are addicted to social media but mobile phones, ipads and laptops create excess active energy," Priya says.

 **FIVE-SECOND FIX** Mirrors and reflective surfaces emit active energy so keep these to a minimum in the bedroom and ensure they face away from the bed.

