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ZEN WORKPLACE

HOW TO USE FENG SHUI TO REDUCE OFFICE STRESS



by



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FOR CORPORATE CONSIDERATION

REASONS TO REDUCE STRESS IN THE OFFICE

IN EUROPE:

According to 2007 data from the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, work-related stress was the root cause of 50% of absenteeism, costing the EU **an estimated \$20 billion (EUR) a year** in direct health costs and lost work-time.

IN THE UNITED STATES:

According to 2004 data from the American Institute of Stress, work-related stress and resulting accidents accounted for 75-80% of absenteeism. This was associated with **an annual cost of \$300 billion (USD)** to businesses in terms of diminished productivity and employee turn-over.

QUESTION:

If investing 1-5% of this amount in Feng Shui preventive measures could save you 20-50% or more of these costs, would you do it?

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1. WHAT FENG SHUI IS (AND WHAT IT'S NOT)

Traditional Feng Shui is the ancient Chinese natural science of building design and placement.

Developed over nearly 5,000 years in conjunction with other nature-based disciplines (like meteorology and seismology), **Feng Shui uses natural laws to explain how the life-force energy of the planet (called "Qi") operates in the physical environment in relation to time, space and individual human beings.** It also gives us specific guidelines on how to site, orient, design, and decorate the buildings where we live and work so as to harmoniously capture this planetary life-force energy and use it productively to support our health and well-being, improve our lives, and attain the goals we so industriously pursue.

After decades of study and research in the areas of metaphysics and mystical traditions, I am confident in saying that although Traditional Feng Shui deals with life-force energy-- a concept often considered strange in the Western world but regularly integrated into daily life in most parts of Asia-- **Feng Shui is not a mystical discipline. The knowledgeable Feng Shui expert does not intend to lead you to any kind of spiritual enlightenment,** which is the primary goal of many mystical disciplines. Rather, Feng Shui operates from the basic elements of mathematics and physics, using these scientific principles to improve and maintain physiological, emotional and mental health for those individuals living and working within a building or other space.

And contrary to popular thinking, Traditional Feng Shui is **not** a belief-based discipline. **The life-force energy of a building will affect its occupants whether they are consciously aware of its existence or not.** This life-force energy is part of the "invisible" global energy field of the entire planet and it is therefore affected by all planetary changes. And, because this powerful, invisible planetary life-force energy runs through all features of the natural environment (including humans) continuously,

it is significantly larger and stronger than an individual's life-force energy or belief system.

Hence, ancient Chinese scholars and proto-scientist of the time quickly realized that it would be much easier to learn how this powerful force moves so they could find out how to harmoniously work with it rather than attempt to deny it and struggle to work against it, a common Western attitude— not necessarily successful.

By observing the natural cycles, they eventually formulated various techniques, many of which involve one of their inventions, a detailed **Geomantic Compass**, to help measure and read the variation of Earth's life-force energy in a building or room depending upon its degree of orientation (For more specific information on how they came to do this, please refer to my book, *Feng Shui for Architecture*.)



Example of a Feng Shui Master's Geomantic Compass

While different people in similar buildings may experience slightly different outcomes due to their age, genetics, genders, educational levels, occupations, and personalities, I have noticed that **if a building has "bad" Feng Shui--** i.e. adverse life-force energy-- **it will prevent its occupants from experiencing harmonious relationships and financial success.** On the other hand, a building that **has "good" Feng Shui--** i.e. positive life-force energy-- **will enhance both financial and personal success.**

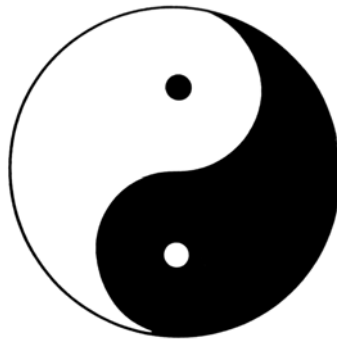
I have often said that **Feng Shui will not make the man or woman, but it will affect their life experiences, their accomplishments, and the likelihood of them reaching their full potential.**

2. A FENG SHUI EXPLANATION OF STRESS

The centuries old Taoist tradition of following “the Way” is about setting processes in motion and then letting them unfold naturally, following their natural courses without attempting to force or control the outcomes. Interfering with the process compromises the end result, the consequences of which are generally unfavorable.

An integral component of this tradition is the understanding of the application of the natural cycles of **Yin** and **Yang**. Yin is the apparent calm and stillness that allows the subtle and (seemingly) invisible changes to take place deep inside a person or situation; Yang is the rampant activity that causes the more obvious, visible, and tangible changes that we witness as the results.

In our fast-paced modern world there isn't much room for calm and stillness. Therefore, processes cannot unfold naturally and in their due time when demands for productivity require constant, rigid deadlines-- **and therein lies the seed of the uneasiness that we call “stress.”**



The Yin and Yang symbol represent the balance of opposites existing in natural cycles.

In Feng Shui all that exists in the Universe is either Yin or Yang (or a combination with various measures of both). For example, nighttime is Yin; daytime is Yang. We primarily rest at night while we are mostly active during the day. Summer is Yang, while winter is Yin. We tend to feel more active and want to be outside during the

warm season with its longer days than during the cold season when we may prefer to spend more time at home and indoors.

Similarly, every activity of our body is ruled by this Yin and Yang duality and follows these natural rhythms. In modern scientific language, such cycles of Yin and Yang that effects human beings (and all living creatures in general) are called **circadian rhythms** (24-hour cycles following the daily cycle of the sun), and **chronobiology** (the formal study of biological temporal rhythms such as daily, seasonal, and annual rhythms).

During the day, our body is in a Yang mode and our sympatethic nervous system is active and alert. We are awake and moving and our open eyes record every action and activity. In addition, we are exposed to the Yang energy of the sun and spend most of our waking hours working and managing our surroundings.

At night (and when we are at rest) our body naturally tends to assume a Yin-mode in which the **parasympatetic nervous system** takes over. As we lie in bed our body is asleep, appearing still and apparently inactive. But under the surface the parasympatetic nervous system quietly repairs the body by counteracting the overstimulation that occurred during the day. **This natural process of rebalancing the Yang activities with Yin activities restores the body to its state of natural balance.**

In this context, the ancient scholars and scientists determined that having the proper amount of sleep at night is a necessary condition to achieve and maintain optimate health. The proper amount, in theory, is whatever amount of sleep is necessary to bring a body back to its natural balance of Yin and Yang, and it varies for each individual. **No matter what that amount is, if the excess of Yang isn't allowed to release fully, it accumulates in the body, disrupting its balance and create that sense of "non-well-being" that we call stress.**

In our modern society sleep and downtime are often equated with laziness, and most of us overpack our schedule with activities that completely fill up our days. I have often heard young excutives bragging about waking up at 5 am, jogging and then going to the gym, arriving to the office by 9 am and working until 8 pm, after which

they sometimes even take more work home with them or do some other business-related activity like have dinner with a client. "Life is too short to sleep," they say. "I'll rest when I die" has become their mantra.

Initially, this overactive lifestyle may feel energizing. The prolonged Yang-dominance of the sympathetic nervous system keeps us focused and alert (i.e. "second wind" effect) — but only for awhile. What we fail to recognize is that this apparent sense of alertness is due to the *overworking* of our adrenal glands, which secrete hormones associated with the "fight-or-flight" response, otherwise known as "stress". **"If the imbalance is not resolved, it can ultimately damage our system on a cellular level, accelerating the disease and aging process."** -- Henry Han, O.M.D., Glenn E. Miller, M.D. and Nancy Deville, *Ancient Herbs, Modern Medicine*, p. 142, 2003.

An early signal of accumulating Yang energy is insomnia: We may experience difficulty falling asleep or remaining in a restful state of sleep during the night. The resulting sleep deprivation depleats kidney life-force energy, leading to fatigue and loss of focus, lack of concentration, the inability to make sound business decisions along with increasing insecurities and fears often out of proportion, as well as back problems. In addition, the constant tension we experience due to the pressures and demands of our busy schedule (more Yang stimulations), adversely effect the life-force energy of the liver, often causing headaches, irritability, lack of patience, and the inability to counteract stressful events.

Next, the life-force energy of the heart is compromised, potentially resulting in panic and anxiety attacks. It is no wonder that **heart disease is now the leading cause of death in industrialized countries.**

In addition, the diminished life-force energy affects other organs, such as the spleen and lungs, causing respectively exaggerated worries and depression along with a myriad of other health problems including weak, achy muscles, gastrointestinal difficulties, poor circulation, skin problems, water retention, shortness of breath and loss of voice. Depending on how long one's Yin and Yang have been out of balance, early medical examination and diagnostic testing may not reveal a problem until it becomes chronic.

From this simplified rendition of the health consequences of living a stressful and unbalanced life, one can derive the impact to both personal and professional levels. To resolve these problems at their source, Traditional Chinese Medicine and acupuncture address the imbalance of Yin and Yang, providing excellent results in reversing the effects of stress at all stages of the problem.



Acupuncture has proven to be very effective in the treatment of stress related symptoms.

Fortunately, before it gets to this state, many of the problems can be prevented or reduced by increasing Yin related factors and reducing Yang related factors in the environments in which we live and work. To this end, **well-designed Feng Shui in an office environment can contribute to health and wellness by reducing the accumulation of stress.**

3. USING FENG SHUI TO CREATE A BALANCED WORKPLACE

"Increased stress increases productivity-- up to a point, after which things rapidly deteriorate, and that level also differs for each of us... You can learn how to utilize and transform stress so that it will make you more productive and less self-destructive."

-Paul J. Rosch, M.D., F.A.C.P.

President, The American Institute of Stress, Clinical Professor of Medicine and Psychiatry, New York Medical College, Honorary Vice-President, International Stress Management Association

In a business setting, Feng Shui can be applied to attain a variety of goals, one of the most popular being to **increase productivity and revenue.** Feng Shui can increase wealth and income in many ways, most of which are independent from the well-being of the employees. In my experience, using Feng Shui to increase your business income is easy. But maintaining the happiness and well-being of individuals is a lot more complicated. However, creating a more comfortable work environment certainly increases productivity and reduces absenteeism and turn-over, ultimately leading to more revenue for the business. Furthermore, its value extends beyond the office to create and maintain pleasant relationships with clients and business associates-- again, positively affecting the bottom line.

While strategy, keen business sense, strong goals, and excellent management can move a company forward, **more and more businesses are using Feng Shui** to remove unexpected roadblocks and **create the success that the company desires and deserves.**

Throughout this report I'll be proposing practical solutions that address the use of Feng Shui for stress management in an office. Implementing all of these at once may not be possible, especially if numerous and adverse pre-existing conditions are already present in a building. However, simply implementing a few of

the steps should result in tangible benefits and provide the motivation to tackle the larger or more complex problems.

Also, it is important to remember: **Feng Shui is ALWAYS good design, but good design does not guarantee good Feng Shui.** Therefore, if you're hiring a designer to create or renovate an office or retail space, do not assume that his or her suggestions will ensure the proper flow of life-force energy that can be achieved by correctly applying the principles of Feng Shui. On the contrary, if you are committed to improving the Feng Shui of your business, **make sure you ALSO hire an experienced Feng Shui Master to work side by side with the designer.** Integrating Feng Shui into the design is the primary goal of the Masters.



Would you say this conference room has good Feng Shui, good design, or both?

4. ON A GENERAL CORPORATE LEVEL

As already mentioned, **stress is the manifestation of an excessive and prolonged stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system, i.e. an overabundance of Yang in the body.**

To manage stress it is therefore necessary to **limit the Yang design features of an office space and counter-balance them with some Yin design features.**

One must also be mindful of **not overcompensating with Yin, or the opposite effect will be achieved.** A work place with an excessive amount of Yin energy will create stagnation of the life-force energy, manifesting on the employee's level as excessive introspection, lack of initiative, and lethargic behavior.

COLOR & MATERIALS

The choice of colors and materials for the interior of an office will vary depending on many advanced factors, such as the building's orientation and the date of construction. However, some general guidelines are as follows:

Plants and water in general will do well in stressful environments. The "real thing" can be quiet effective: a table top fountain on a desk (or larger in common areas), an aquarium, or simply a vase of freshly cut flowers or bamboo can help suit the irritated "liver energy" that causes the employees various anger problems. The life-force energy of a healthy liver relates to the wood element, so green plants will strengthen it while water, being productive to wood, will enhance it. In addition, when placed correctly with the help of a Feng Shui Master, water can increase the financial income of the business.

Colors like **green, blue-green, and blue will do extremely well in stressful environments** because they relate to the wood and water elements and support the liver's depleted energy.

Use a lighter hue, rather than a saturated color, **for large walls.** Reserve the **saturated color and darker tones for smaller details.**

Of all the colors, **white** has the most Yang energy and **shouldn't be used extensively as a wall color**, especially for large surfaces.

The **color palette should be planned in advance** for all components of the space. By matching "pigments" you'll naturally create harmony, which is essential for good Feng Shui. Hire a qualified color consultant if necessary-- because while most of us like colors, not all of us have the sensitivity it takes to create successful color schemes that work well together.

Avoid patterns, especially multiple or clashing patterns of colors or textures (including wood grains). Offices are generally busy enough. A décor filled with "busy" patterns only creates distraction and 'Leakage" in the individual's attention (and life-force). Exceptions are one-colored fabric textures.



A Winter garden, providing natural light, fresh air, plants and water can go a long way to prevent and reduce stress in the workplace.

LIGHT

As much as possible, **reduce the use of glaring florescent lighting**. In terms of artificial light a warm light, or (ideally) a full-spectrum light is preferable.

Natural light and fresh air are always the first choice, the importance of which has been acknowledged in many parts of Europe by having them even become mandated by building codes. The natural “Yang-ness” of the sun positively stimulates and replenishes the life-force energy of the individual, while the gentle breeze brings in new, vibrant life-force energy. Together these entities support the body’s physiological balance and help create health and wellness.

However, **be mindful of excessive exposure**, caused by, for example, enormous floor-to-ceiling windows common in modern office buildings. The “super-Yang-ness” of these design features creates a sense of unprotected exposure that I have nicknamed the “fish-bowl-effect.” The openness of the space causes irritability and an expansion in the individual’s life-force energy, resulting in the feeling of always being “spread thin.” A way to reduce this “fish-bowl-effect” is to design sitting arrangements so that the employee’s back does not face a window or glass wall. A portion of opaque wall, a partition, or even a piece of furniture of medium height is preferable to a whole backdrop of glass.



Example of the “Fish-Bowl-Effect”

Window treatments are also recommended, when possible, to reduce the “fish-bowl-effect,” particularly if nearby employees are using computers. Staring at a computer screen with a glaring light coming from a window in front of you causes irritation of the eyes, due to the excessive Yang-ness your eyes are exposed to.

FURNITURE & SITTING ARRANGEMENTS

Whenever possible, always provide direct views to an entrance. It is preferable not to have employees sit with their backs to the entry of an office or a cubicle, as the perception of activities (Yang) behind one's back tends to create a sense of uneasiness that reduces one's attention span and focus and leaves them feeling vulnerable to back-stabbing (metaphorically speaking). **Placing work stations so that an individuals' back faces a wall, partition, or medium-to-high piece of furniture will create less activity behind them and therefore, less distraction.**

Avoid placing an employee in a direct line with the door of an office or cubicle. A similar rationale applies: the continuous distraction from the activity (Yang) perceived through the door will prevent focus and productivity by splitting the person's attention and therefore his or her life-force energy will be reduced.

Positioning the desk to the side of the door will enhance retention of life-force energy, reduce stress and increase productivity.

De-clutter and organize desk and storage spaces and create more storage space whenever necessary. (Even the most organized of us can't avoid clutter when running out of space.) More and more organizations are striving to "go paperless," shifting the burden of paper storage in endless filing cabinets to easier, digital files that will be managed by computer software systems (such as Canon's new iW360).

Individual offices should be rectangular and regularly shaped as opposed to L-shaped or some other irregular shape, which promotes mental and physiological imbalances.

Use **ergonomic furniture and principles** whenever possible. Many European countries have adopted ergonomic standards for years, and the positive results speak for themselves.

5. THE OFFICE SPACE

INDIVIDUAL OFFICES

Unless you work for yourself or are the CEO of a large company, **you may not have much input about your office, cubicle, or workstation.** It is simply assigned to you. **So how can you make the best of it?**

Desk location: When possible, identify the so-called **“power position”** in the room. This is where the life-force energy is healthiest and most stable. Generally, this position is one in which you have a solid wall behind you, and you are able to see the door or entrance way, but you’re not in direct line with it.

In some cases, the layout of the office requires the desk to be placed with one’s back to a window. Don’t panic-- just **use blinds, window treatments or plants to partially block the window.** This will improve concentration and reduce backstabbing from competition.



Example of a “Floating Desk” with the “Power Position” at the back

The main portion of the **desk should be “floating,”** that is, not facing the wall when doing most of your work. The openness to the front will improve your creativity and logical thinking. The computer should be placed on the main desk. If you need part of the desk for other activities position the computer to one side-- to the right if you are right-handed, or to the left if you are left-handed. (As for cable placement, it is best

to just bundle them up and tape them under the desk or ask your company's electrician to hide them.)

The printer, scanner, and other office devices **should be reachable from your chair and arranged in an L-shaped** configuration. They should be positioned to your right if you are right-handed and to your left if you are left-handed. The main access to the chair should be from the open side of the L, with the back of the chair towards the wall.

Similarly, if you use **the return of an L-shaped desk** as a secondary work surface it should be on your right if you are right-handed and on your left if you are left-handed. Again, access to the chair should be from the open side of the L and opposite of the return. In this case, your printer, scanner and other devices should be nearby on a separate piece of furniture (across from the return and without blocking the access to the chair).

CUBICLES

One of the main problems with cubicles is that the person often works with his or her back exposed to the entrance (again, causing distraction and exposure to “energetic” back-stabbing). Furthermore, **low partitions expose their occupants to the noise and conversations from neighboring cubicles**-- further distracting them from the task at hand and often creating resentment towards those colleagues resulting in conflict rather than teamwork. And the insufficient space may also prevent inadequate storage and encourage desktop clutter.

All of these circumstances **create “leakage” in the life-force energy of the employees** who may then become fatigued after just a few hours in the office. Not only does overall productivity decrease, but the management usually becomes preoccupied with his or her poor performance—creating even more stress for the employee.

Redesigning office cubicles so as to make them more effective can be incredibly beneficial to the overall efficiency and productivity of a company. Some of the following suggestions are similar to those offered for single offices, but tailored for the multi-cubicle workspace environment.

The **main working surface** should be positioned toward the hallway, separated with a medium-height partition. The storage area and printer should be easily accessible behind the person's chair. The partition that divides the cubicle from the neighboring cubicle serves as a supporting back wall (reproducing the "power position"). This partition should be high enough to prevent excessive noise from traveling from one cubicle to the next.

The **main working surface should have an L-shaped return** to create additional workspace positioned to the right side for right-handed people and on the left side for left-handed people.

The **entrance to the cubicle** should be on the same wall as the main work surface and not in line with the person's chair.

It is preferable for the computer, printer, and other technical devices to be located in the part of the cubicle that is opposite the entrance and just below the partition that divides it from the next cubicle.

OPEN FLOOR PLAN

This contemporary office design concept is becoming progressively more popular and can be very effective for work stations in which the employees are not spending most of their time at a desk, but rather need to be in constant communication with others during the course of the day.

The main challenges are similar to those of cubicles, a lack of privacy and exposure to lots of activity that is progressively distracting, again "leaking" life-force energy away from their tasks and causing them fatigue and the risk of becoming less productive.

Employees partnered on the same project shouldn't be sitting facing each other, but rather side by side so that on an energy level they can communicate as equals rather than as "opposing" entities. This will improve their teamwork.



It is difficult to stay focused and productive when sharing a space with this many employees.

In addition to the considerations about light, colors, and sitting arrangements as mentioned previously, I suggest using storage items (i.e. file cabinets) or bookshelves of medium height (or ones higher than the employee when sitting at their desk) to create a supportive element behind the employees' back while sitting at his or her work station. **This simple reproduction of the "power position"** can do much to create a feeling of protection and stability that will positively affect their productivity and provide easy access to nearby storage. (The configuration will vary depending on the design of your plans.)

6. ADVANCED FENG SHUI (GRAB YOUR COMPASS)

What else can be done to use the life-force energy of the planet in ways that specifically support the individual employees and the company as a whole? Feng Shui provides a multitude of techniques that can be used to increase sales, improve brand recognition, attract more customers, and create a more positive work environment. I have selected a few and described them here below. Each suggestion is based on the date of birth of each individual (when designing and arranging offices and cubicles), or by the office space of the organization at large (to stimulate team work, improve personal energy, and avoid conflicts). To best identify these directions, I suggest you use a compass marked with 45 degree increments (a standard hiking or navigational compass will suffice).

GOOD MANAGEMENT: KEEPING THE PEACE

Based on your date of birth, the following **Peaceful Direction Chart** indicates how to reduce bickering, back-stabbing, and politicking as well as how to improve teamwork.

The direction is identified by your year of birth and gender, and it indicates the section of the building, office, or cubicle that will specifically stimulate “peace and good management” for you. When possible, it is ideal to place your chair in that area of the building, or to orient your desk so that your back is facing that direction. Having the entrance to your office or cubicle in your “peaceful section” will help as well.

As an alternative, or in addition to all of the above, this chart uses a productive action of the **Five Elements Theory**, one of the basics of Feng Shui and Chinese Medicine. It lists the ideal element (water, wood, fire, earth, or metal) to place in that section to further activate the “peace and good management” energy field. Because Feng Shui is a natural science and its’ results stem from natural laws, it is important to use the actual natural elements rather than substitute them with pictures or plastic representations.

PEACEFULL DIRECTION CHART

As stated above, your personal "Peace and Good Management Direction" is based on your date of birth and gender. The cut off time is February 5 of every year (as suppose to January 1 or the start of the Chinese new year). This calculation is based on the Chinese solar calendar and this date is scientifically identified as the beginning of spring worldwide.

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE
1936	North (Metal)	North East (Fire)
1937	South (Wood)	North West (Earth)
1938	North East (Fire)	West (Earth)
1939	West (Earth)	North East (Fire)
1940	North West (Earth)	South (Wood)
1941	South West (Fire)	North (Metal)
1942	South East (Water)	South West (Fire)
1943	East (Water)	East (Water)
1944	South West (Fire)	South East (Water)
1945	North (Metal)	North East (Fire)
1946	South (Wood)	North West (Earth)
1947	North East (Fire)	West (Earth)
1948	West (Earth)	North East (Fire)
1949	North West (Earth)	South (Wood)
1950	South West (Fire)	North (Metal)
1951	South East (Water)	South West (Fire)
1952	East (Water)	East (Water)
1953	South West (Fire)	East (Water)
1954	North (Metal)	South West (Fire)
1955	South (Wood)	North West (Earth)
1956	North East (Fire)	West (Earth)
1957	West (Earth)	North East (Fire)
1958	North West (Fire)	South (Wood)
1959	South West (Fire)	North (Metal)
1960	South East (Water)	South West (Fire)
1961	East (Water)	East (Water)
1962	South West (Fire)	South East (Water)
1963	Kan (Water)	North East (Fire)
1964	South (Wood)	North West (Earth)
1965	North East (Fire)	West (Earth)
1966	West (Earth)	North East (Fire)
1967	North West (Earth)	South (Wood)
1968	South West (Fire)	Kan (Water)
1969	South East (Water)	South West (Fire)
1970	East (Water)	East (Water)
1971	South West (Fire)	South East (Water)

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE
1972	Kan (Water)	North East (Fire)
1973	South (Wood)	North West (Earth)
1974	North East (Fire)	West (Earth)
1975	West (Earth)	North East (Fire)
1976	North West (Earth)	South (Wood)
1977	South West (Fire)	Kan (Water)
1978	South East (Water)	South West (Fire)
1979	East (Water)	East (Water)
1980	South West (Fire)	South East (Water)
1981	Kan (Water)	North East (Fire)
1982	Li (Wood)	North West (Earth)
1983	North East (Fire)	West (Earth)
1984	West (Earth)	North East (Fire)
1985	North West (Earth)	South (Wood)
1986	South West (Fire)	Kan (Water)
1987	South East (Water)	South West (Fire)
1988	East (Water)	East (Water)
1989	South West (Fire)	South East (Water)
1990	Kan (Water)	North East (Fire)
1991	South (Wood)	North West (Earth)
1992	North East (Fire)	West (Earth)
1993	West (Earth)	North East (Fire)
1994	North West (Earth)	South (Wood)
1995	South West (Fire)	Kan (Water)
1996	South East (Water)	South West (Fire)
1997	East (Water)	East (Water)
1998	South West (Fire)	South East (Water)
1999	Kan (Water)	North East (Fire)
2000	South (Wood)	North West (Earth)
2001	North East (Fire)	West (Earth)
2002	West (Earth)	North East (Fire)
2003	North West (Earth)	South (Wood)
2004	South West (Fire)	Kan (Water)
2005	South East (Water)	South West (Fire)
2006	East (Water)	East (Water)
2007	South West (Fire)	South East (Water)
2008	Kan (Water)	North East (Fire)

Legend: In parenthesis I indicate the elements to be placed in that direction to strengthen its energy filed.

WATER – Blue Colors and Water Features.

WOOD – Green Colors and Green Plants (tying a small red ribbon to it's OK).

FIRE – Red Color.

EARTH – Earth Colors and Natural Stone or Clay-made Objects.

METAL – Neutral Colors (White, Gray) and Metal Objects.

INCREASE YOUR PERSONAL POWER

The following chart indicates your **Personal Power Direction**. This direction is ideal to raise your energy, create clarity, and improve overall well-being. To activate its potential make sure to keep this area of your office and cubicle clean, free of clutter, and always well-lit. The Yang-ness of the light will activate the energy of this section contributing to increasing your personal energy as well.

In an open floor plan with multiple employees each of the eight directions will relate to some employee or another. In this case, keeping the whole office space clean, organized, and well-lit will help support everyone in the organization.

PERSONAL POWER DIRECTION CHART

Your personal "Power Direction" is based on your year of birth. (There is no gender difference in this case.) Again, the cut off time is February 5 of every year (as suppose to January 1 or the start of the Chinese new year), based on the same reason given for the Peaceful Direction Chart.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>SECTION</u> (of Office or Cubicle)
1936	North
1937	North East
1938	North East
1939	East
1940	South East
1941	South East
1942	South
1943	South West
1944	South West
1945	West
1946	North West
1947	North West
1948	North
1949	North East
1950	North East
1951	East
1952	South East
1953	South East
1954	South
1955	South West
1956	South West
1957	West
1958	North West
1959	North West

YEAR **SECTION (of Office or Cubicle)**

1960	North
1961	North East
1962	North East
1963	East
1964	South East
1965	South East
1966	South
1967	South West
1968	South West
1969	West
1970	North West
1971	North West
1972	North
1973	North East
1974	North East
1975	East
1976	South East
1977	South East
1978	South
1979	South West
1980	South West
1981	West
1982	North West
1983	North West
1984	North
1985	North East
1986	North East
1987	East
1988	South East
1989	South East
1990	South
1991	South West
1992	South West
1993	West
1994	North West
1995	North West
1996	North
1997	North East
1998	North East
1999	East
2000	South East
2001	South East
2002	South
2003	South West
2004	South West
2005	West
2006	North West
2007	North West
2008	North

OFFICE ARGUMENTS AND HARMONY: DIRECTIONS

When an office environment experiences continual multiple arguments and frequent “energetic” back-stabbings, or lacks an overall sense of cohesiveness, it is possible that some key area—the main entry, common rec. room, management offices, or CEO’s office-- of its layout is located in one of the “unfavorable” directions, which I’ll refer to as the **“arguments direction”** in the following chart.

Based on the direction that the office space faces, I have listed the direction that is most likely to be the cause of such conflicts between members of an organization. If an entry way or a principle area of the organization is placed in such a section, the effects will be felt by all members, regardless of the location of their workspace.

Next to the “arguments direction” I have also listed the **“harmonious direction.”** If the entry way or a common room frequently used by many employees is located in this area, a harmonious office environment will result.

If the layout of the building doesn’t allow for the main entrance to be re-located in the “harmonious direction” create a meeting area or conference room in that part of the building and encourage its use. Also, make sure that this area remains clean, organized, and well-lit at all times to prevent the stagnation of life-force energy, which would reverse its positive effects.

ARGUMENTS & HARMONY CHART

Each building, depending on its orientation, possesses a direction that supports its occupant’s harmonious relationships and one that causes arguments due to their alignment with the planet’s life-force energy that can be supportive or adverse to that building’s particular life-force energy.

In this chart I have indicated what those are, using the direction toward which the building faces as a reference.

This particular system doesn’t take the time factor into consideration, so you are not restricted by the date of construction of the building.

<u>BUILDING FACING</u>	<u>ARGUMENTS</u>	<u>HARMONY</u>
South	West	North
South West	South	North East
West	South West	East
North West	North West	South East
North	North East	South
North East	East	South West
East	North	West
South East	South East	North West

7. ON A LARGER SCALE

DESIGNING THE BUILDING'S LAYOUT

Many companies have found that designing a physical workspace using Feng Shui to subtly manipulate the life-force energy of the building-- through the use of furniture arrangements, color schemes, and natural materials-- has had a profound impact on their business: **Profits have increased, clientele have grown, corporate reputations have improved, productivity has increased, while negative office politics, conflicts and excessive stress amongst employees have decreased.**

To achieve these results it is best to integrate the Feng Shui guidelines as early in the process as possible-- ideally, when the building is being designed. For example, the locations of entrances-- along with key departments-- have a strong effect on the overall Feng Shui of the building, yet they are difficult to change once the building has been built. Optimal locations and layouts should be chosen for key offices and departments, especially those of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chief Operating Officer (COO), general managers, departments of sales, marketing and human resources, and executive conference rooms.

Although ignored by modern versions of Feng Shui that have been popularized in recent years, the year of building's construction also affects the building's life-force energy. This, combined with the building's degree of orientation, is largely what establishes its unique energetic patterns and potentials. Some buildings are better than others, and within a building, some areas are better than others for attracting success, opportunity, and wealth. **The purpose of incorporating principles of Feng Shui during the design phase of a building is to take full advantage of its positive potentials and to neutralize the negative ones.**

After all, you don't really want to end up signing important documents in a "black energy" area, do you?

8. OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

In many ways, **Feng Shui depends on people's actions and deeds as much as the Feng Shui design of their homes and offices.** For instance, if we are experiencing crankiness, **a little restrain will go a long way** in keeping harmony with our colleagues and friends. However, if we notice an escalation in our crankiness and the inability to control it, perhaps we are experiencing a higher level of stress than average and should consider additional measures to regain control.

The following are some pointers to help reduce stress on a personal level.

Some corporations are now integrating these practices, providing employees with effective ways to manage their stress. The results have been surprisingly successful.

SPEND TIME IN NATURE

I am a strong supporter of **spending at least an hour a week walking in nature.**

This is not a time for brain-storming or problem-solving. Just breathe the clean air and let nature's magic work its miracle. Since our body is naturally connected with the invisible web of life-force energy that is present everywhere in nature (yet sadly lacking in our modern, fast-paced urban environments), **our own energy system tends to reconnect to its natural rhythm when surrounded by it.**

You do not have to do anything really, just kick back and let it take its course. The results will be faster and more effective if you can turn off your cell phones-- temporarily disconnecting from "urgent" questions, issues, and deadlines. This is not lazy indulgence. Rather, it is an investment in your health and well-being and, in turn, your future.



MEDITATION

In a study reported on by the U.S. top rated journalist show *20/20* on the ABC national network in 2006, meditation turned out to be the most effective way to counteract stress on personal and professional levels. This finding is not surprising, given that the beneficial effects of meditation have been known for hundreds (perhaps thousands) of years in many cultures.

The practice of offering employees weekly sessions of guided meditation has been adopted by some corporations and feedback from the participants has been very positive. In fact, once introduced to this practice at work, many have continued to meditate (and reap the benefits) at home as well.

There are a number of meditation techniques available. Below I describe an effective yet fairly general technique that is widely accessible. As a beginner **20 to 30 minutes of simple, silent relaxation can do wonders to induce the body into a parasympathetic mode (Yin) and disengage from the day's activity.**

Begin by sitting quietly, with eyes closed, in a softly-lit room. Often, after sitting down to relax, a multitude of thoughts will flood your mind, calling your attention away from this silent meditation. This is the "noise" of the stress releasing: It means you're doing a good job! So, don't become discouraged. The "noise" will continue for a little while longer (depending on how stressed you are), but eventually-- as your energy system returns to a state of balance-- your mind will calm down and the stream of distracting thoughts will slow down and eventually stop. You may also "fall asleep" while meditating, especially as a beginner. However, what you are experiencing is not real sleep, but rather a state of "unconsciousness" that is caused by the intense release of stress, requiring your body to completely disengage from activity. Allow it to.

Adopting this meditative practice before going to sleep at night will greatly improve the quality of your rest, as you'll be releasing a large amount of stress *before* going to bed rather than during the night. Without meditation, the only opportunity for the Yang-ness accumulated during the day to release may be during sleep. After a particularly Yang-dominated day you may notice this as a result

of tossing and turning while trying to fall asleep, or by waking up multiple times during the night.

Similarly, a 10 to 20 minute meditative practice in the morning, after grooming and eating breakfast but before leaving the house, **can help you center yourself and focus on the tasks of the day**. And, when facing a particularly difficult day, taking a 10 minute break for a brief meditation session will help you release the tension and get back on track so that you don't have to carry that burden for the rest of the day.

In the beginning the results may not be immediately obvious. But, if you give it a chance by practicing mediation daily for a week or two, you'll see that the benefits are truly priceless.

YOGA, TAI QI AND QI GONG

These low-impact, stress-reducing, ancient exercises are ideal to calmly transition between the activity of the day and into a state of deep relaxation. Developed over centuries, they are designed to balance, calm, and revitalize. The repeated patterns of gentle movements release tension, increase circulation, and bring quiet to the nervous system. Some companies now offer their employees passes to local Yoga, Tai Qi, or Qi Gong centers as part of their benefit package.

Please note that some exercises are designed to *activate* the energy system and hence, are more suited for a morning practice to kick off the day rather than for after-hours relaxation. Discuss your goals with your instructor before beginning your practice, or, for a home practice, carefully read the instructions on the case of your DVD to make sure the routine is right for you.

MASSAGE

The benefits of Swedish and Shiatsu massages have not only been recognized for centuries, but have been widely analyzed and promoted by masters of healing, such as Deepak Chopra, Dr. Andrew Weil, and Dr. Christiane Northrup.

Today, more and more companies are offering 15 minute chair massages (focusing on the neck, shoulders, and back), as a weekly treat to their employees during regular office hours. Others, like Coca-Cola, Delta Airlines, and Microsoft, encourage their employees to have massages once a week as part of their wellness program. **These company policies not only have resulted in increased employee retention rates and decreased sick leave, but also have improved their applicant pools.**



SLEEP

As mentioned earlier in this report **nothing is more effective for restoring good health and rejuvenating your energy system than a good night of sound sleep** (preferably, every night). If sleeping problems have become chronic and all else has failed, perhaps you should consider consulting a medical doctor or doctor of Traditional Chinese medicine. In my experience, acupuncture can be very effective for releasing stress and curing insomnia. In fact, many allopathic doctors now refer patients to acupuncturists to treat these ailments.

The ultimate goal of *all* the various relaxation techniques previously described in this chapter is to help you release the accumulated stress before going to sleep so that your sleep can be as restful and rejuvenating as possible. With this goal in mind, **Feng Shui can be extremely useful to creating a comfortable and safe sleeping environment. But this is a matter for a different place and time.**

TO SUM – UP:

TOP 10 FENG SHUI OFFICE TIPS

- 1) Reduce the use of glaring florescent lighting to a minimum. Natural light and fresh air are always preferable. To reduce excessive exposure and “fish-bowl-effect”, use window treatments.
- 2) In locating a desk, whenever possible, always provide direct views to an entrance. Avoid placing an employee in a direct line with the door of an office or a cubicle.
- 3) Colors like green, blue-green, and blue will do well. Avoid the extensive use of white on walls. Avoid patterns, especially multiple or clashing patterns of colors or textures.
- 4) Plants and water in general will do well in highly stressful environments, as long as they don't create more clutter (and more stress).
- 5) De-clutter and organize desk and storage spaces – including digital - and create more storage space whenever necessary.
- 6) Place desks in the “power position”, with the back to a solid wall rather than an open space. All desks should be “floating”, rather than facing the wall, when doing most of your work.
- 7) In a cubicle, the main working surface should be positioned facing toward the hallway, separated with a medium-height partition.
- 8) For the open plan, I suggest using medium height partition or bookshelves to reproduce the “power position” behind the employees' back.
- 9) Use advanced Feng Shui techniques to activate specific supportive directions based on date of birth or building orientation.
- 10) To reduce stress and promote well-being, practice a moderate and balanced lifestyle. Remember: stress shouldn't be an excuse for poor behavior inside, or outside, the office.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the day **we are what we do more than we think** and, well... many of us feel that life is too short to spend it in an environment that doesn't support our well-being or worse, creates toxicity in our lives in the form of unwanted and not needed stress that adversely effects our health so we end up inevitably taking it home, contaminating our personal and family lives with it.

In light of my studies, and both my professional and personal experiences, **using Feng Shui to create a balanced working environment is the ultimate sound business investment, for:**

- 1) The company will have a "leg up" on the competition in terms of being strategically supported in creating more wealth and productivity.
- 2) The financial and functional benefits of having less used sick days and reduced employee turn-over results.
- 3) The added benefits of creating higher employee morale, less arguments, and more cohesive teamwork-- as much between the employees as between the executives-- increases productivity and performance as well as overall corporate pride.
- 4) And lastly, the lower stress level carried from work will extend to the employees personal and family life, begetting less stress at home and thus bouncing back as less stress returning back into the workplace.

**In light of these considerations, businesses can't go wrong:
Utilizing Feng Shui to create a "Zen Workplace" is the ultimate win-win solution.**

SIMONA F. MAININI, DR. ARCH. & FENG SHUI MASTER

Dr. Simona F. Mainini is a Doctor in Architecture, Italian licensed architect, and a Feng Shui Master who uses Traditional Feng Shui to help others increase health, abundance and well being in their lives.

In 1997 she created **Feng Shui For Architecture**, a full-scale Feng Shui consulting firm that has been pioneering the field of Feng Shui application in the United States and Europe, helping hundreds of clients by providing thorough consultations. In particular, she has specialized in projects under design, new construction, and renovation. One of her latest large-scale project dealt with the new Golden Monkey Exhibit at the Los Angeles Zoo, opening in 2008, which gained world-wide exposure for being the first animal enclosure designed with Feng Shui principals.

Dr. Mainini has been dubbed "the expert" in the field of Feng Shui to hire when you're looking for answers about Feng Shui. Some areas of interest include stress reduction in corporate offices, increasing business revenues, attaining personal and professional goals, improving teens study habits, health and wellness, home renovation, real estate development, animal habitats, interior design, garden design and many others.

Her clients have included corporations, casinos, animal habitats, business executives, homeowners, developers, diplomats, manufacturing plants, movie production companies, spiritual leaders, and celebrities. *"By assisting them in correcting their "big" Feng Shui problems, we have helped them bring in the well being, financial prosperity, and success that they want and deserve."*

Dr. Mainini teaches *Feng Shui For Designers and Architects* for the ArchID Program at UCLA Extension and is the **author of *Feng Shui for Architecture***. She is currently at work on her new book of which this report represents a preview. For more information, please visit www.fengshuiarch.com or e-mail SimonaM@sbcglobal.net



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