

Do you have problems with getting a good night's sleep? Do you want better quality sleep? If this is the case you might want to look at where your bed is located and the direction you sleep in. Read on to find out more about how Feng Shui can help you achieve better sleep and sweeter dreams...

FENG SHUI SECRETS TO A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Sleep is an essential part of our health and wellbeing. Ongoing sleep deficiency has been linked to irritability, anxiety, weight gain and depression. Recent studies have also shown a connection between an increased risk of cardiac disease, diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure and even cancer. While we sleep our heart and blood vessels go through a regeneration process. A good night's sleep makes us feel better, putting us in a better mood. It helps us maintain a steady and healthy weight. Scientists believe that people who sleep well live longer lives and that a good night's sleep is also good for the brain; improving learning abilities and performance. Those who sleep well are much better at fighting depression; they are more tolerant and are generally in a better overall mood. With an improved ability to focus, they are more likely to avoid accidents, which are typically linked to sleep deprivation or bad sleep quality.

Can we improve our sleep simply by using Feng Shui? Of course we can! As a matter of fact, the very first step of a Feng Shui home assessment is finding the optimal location for your bed and determining the best possible direction to sleep in.

BED PLACEMENT VERSUS YIN/YANG

Bed placement is crucial for a good night's sleep and optimal health. Where you sleep is really important. Ideally a bedroom is as far away as possible from the main entrance to the house. It should also not



be adjacent to or located above (in a double story house) the main entrance, bathroom, kitchen or garage.

From the point of view of a Feng Shui expert, your bed should not be located near the door or by a window in the bedroom. This is because these openings allow Qi energy to enter, creating an unsettled zone. If you have no option but to locate your bed by the door, consider using a decorative screen between the two; or shades and curtains between your bed and a window. This will definitely improve the situation. It is also not a good idea to have your bed directly facing the bedroom door as this has the effect of unsettling the mind as you lie in bed.

The next important piece of advice is to try and position your bed against a wall. This will definitely help improve the quality of your sleep! When your bed is left "hanging" in the room (i.e. not against a wall) this creates instability which over time can lead to the development of various sleep disturbances – finding it difficult to fall asleep; waking up during the night etc. You may not have already noticed this but a headboard on the bed always helps, especially in those situations where you are unable to place your bed against a wall. So it's time to invest in a bed with a headboard, choose the quietest room in the house and put your bed against a wall!

BEDROOM AND BED PLACEMENT VERSUS EIGHT TYPES OF HOUSES

It's always advantageous to put your bedroom in one of the favorable locations in your home. This can be determined by its Facing/Sitting*. This classification of East/West types of properties is typically applied to residential properties. This states that if your property is a West type you simply put your bedroom in a West location, as can be seen in the table below. So now you just need to use a compass in order to get in sync with your home as this will also help improve your sleep!

West locations (West type property)	West	Northwest	Southwest	Northeast
East locations (East type property)	East	Southeast	North	South

You can also apply this principle to your own bedroom – just find the East/West locations of your bedroom and place your bed in the best ones.

* A thorough explanation of Facing and Sitting can be found in the book *A Course in Real Feng Shui*.

BED PLACEMENT VERSUS FLYING STARS

Flying Stars are bodies of Qi energy; they have quite distinctive qualities and can have a direct effect on our sleep. The Flying Stars that have the most beneficial effect on our sleep (via bed placement) are #1, #6, #8, #9 and #4. These will help make you strong and healthy and can also have a calming influence. It is important to be aware that active Stars such as #8, #9 and #3 can interfere with sleep, making it difficult to fall asleep, causing wakefulness during the night and causing an over-active mind. Categorically the locations of Stars 2 and 5 should be avoided, especially for bedrooms of people who are quite sensitive, the elderly and pregnant women.

* To calculate the Flying Stars chart of your property (for free) just follow this link: www.bit.ly/FengCalc

SLEEPING DIRECTION

The direction you sleep in is vitally important and there is usually an immediate improvement in sleep issues once the bed has been moved or a better sleeping direction has been established. When having to decide between a few different favorable personal directions, we usually prefer less active directions for sleep – the Northeast, Northwest, West or South. It is also advisable to avoid any Void line directions for sleep as these can create feelings of unrest over a period of time.

* You can find out more about the three different types of Void lines in Althea's Feng Shui book: www.bit.ly/FENGBOOK

THE INFLUENCE OF SHA

When going through the process of assessing where your bed is located it is important to also pay attention to the influence of the landscape and surroundings. Before you choose the right bedroom you should take a look out of the bedroom window. If there is any sort of harsh or busy view (such as jagged mountains, or active waterfalls), or Sha (such as a straight road coming toward your bedroom window, a wind tunnel, the pointy edges of your neighbor's roof, etc.), then you should consider choosing a different room to sleep in. If you don't have the flexibility of choice then you can always try and find a solution by using "protection", so a small wall, fence or shrub (which admittedly is much easier when you live in a house). It's good to be aware that when the house or apartment (especially in small buildings) is situated close to a large body of water, putting a bedroom on the same side (particularly when there are large windows) is definitely not a good solution. The idea behind this is that in order to achieve sound sleep one needs to feel safe and a large body of water has the opposite effect.

External and internal Sha is created by any object that breaks the flow of energy. This has the effect of exerting very strong and disturbing influences on people, making them feel upset, creating physical

problems and of course issues with sleep. The influence of Sha depends on its proximity, the length of exposure, the Sha's strength, annual Flying Stars and other influences. External Sha can come in the form of the sharp edges of other buildings, telephone poles or power lines (especially when they cross each other) and facing narrow gaps etc. There is also Noise Sha, which comes from traffic and other external sources. This will interfere with your sleep when your bed is exposed to it, more so when there are windows on the noisy side. Sha Qi can also be created inside a house as a result of sharp edges of furniture, so it is vital to be aware of this when choosing the location of your bed.

SOME BAD EXAMPLES

We rely on Qi and we want it to flow easily. For this reason a cluttered room can be quite detrimental to our health; whenever energy becomes stuck it creates a problem. So we don't want our bed to be jammed between two pieces of heavy furniture as this will restrict the flow of Qi. It is a similar situation when a bed cannot be accessed easily and you have to find an indirect route to get into it at night. There are other situations that can have a bad affect on sleep such as having a room that has constant foot traffic which creates unsettled Qi.

SIZE ALWAYS MATTERS

Believe it not, the size of your bed is really relevant. The ideal bed should not be too large in relation to the room, as this can restrict the flow of energy, which we really want to avoid. Additionally a solid bed is preferable to a folding bed, simply because a folding bed doesn't have a headboard.

HOW ELSE CAN I IMPROVE MY SLEEP?

There's a lot you can take control of to help fix your sleep issues. Most crucially you have bed placement, or where you locate your bed, and you've read through these suggestions already. However, you can always do more! We suggest paying attention to natural cycles; we are part of nature, just as nature is part of us. So... in the winter months try going to bed earlier. In spring and summer try and get up with the sunrise in order to catch the Yang. Avoid watching news or any disturbing movies before you go to sleep. Drink mild thyme or chamomile tea about an hour before heading to bed; this will help sooth your mind. And finally try and avoid eating after 6pm and be in bed by 11pm as this is when the detoxification of your body starts.

