



Balance your physical, emotional and spiritual energies by purifying your living area. Here, Bonnie Cleaver orders a spring clean

# spaceclearing

## *healing for your home*

**H**ave you ever walked into a house and sensed something wasn't quite right – perhaps the feeling was cold and unwelcoming, or the air felt heavy and oppressive? Or, walking into a room after an argument, have you felt physically uneasy, like the bad energy was still lingering in the air?

According to space clearers, everything in the universe is made of energy, including the buildings we live and work in. As such, every thought, emotion and conversation that goes on in a space sends out energetic ripples. Over time, this energetic 'dust' accumulates and becomes imprinted in the fabric of the building, subtly influencing the lives of inhabitants, which is why regular energetic 'spring cleaning' is important.

### What is space clearing?

Space clearing is a term coined in the late 1980s by feng shui expert Karen Kingston to describe the process of cleansing and consecrating spaces to enhance the flow of energy, both in the home and in people's lives. "We leave energetic footprints of ourselves whenever we express emotion, and because houses are like sponges that energy builds up over time," says Sarah K. Jones, of Lotus Temple space clearing. "That's where space clearing can help – it's about maintaining the optimal energetic health of your home so it can support and help you manifest your dreams."

It's most commonly recognised as a specialised branch of feng shui, but space-clearing practices date back to the Native American Indians, the Mayans and ancient Shamans.

"Techniques like smudging are thousands of years old. The Australian Aborigines,

for example, used eucalyptus branches as smudge sticks to cleanse their sacred sites," says Jones. "In Catholicism, the burning of frankincense and myrrh in the church is used to bless the space."

### When is space clearing useful?

People typically seek out a space clearing session if they feel stuck in a rut, want to create new opportunities or to assist healing after a big upheaval such as divorce, illness or death.

Ursula Lovelock, a feng shui consultant specialising in space clearing, says it is also beneficial when you're moving into a new house. "If you think about an old home, a lot has happened in there – there have been arguments, sickness, people crying, all of which builds up like layers of energetic dust," she says. "This 'predecessor chi' can affect you in subtle ways. For example, if the previous occupants were quite negative, you could start feeling stuck or sad. Or if they argued a lot in one

particular room, you could start to repeat that pattern."

Another instance where space clearing can be useful is when entities in a home are holding people back or blocking positive energy from entering the property. Jones describes the example of clients who had flooding problems and had spent 18 months trying to get builders to come out for a quote.

"When I stepped onto the property I sensed there was an entity in one of the rooms that needed to be moved on," says Jones. "At one point in the space clearing ceremony, the bells we were using smashed and fell on the floor as if the energy suddenly shifted. And, at the same time, the clients received a call from one of the builders saying his schedule had suddenly freed up."

### Preparation and purification

Most space clearers divide the consultation into four parts – preparation, purification, invocation and the infusing ceremony. ▶



## FINDING A PRACTITIONER

There is no official space clearing body in Australia, but you can contact the Association of Feng Shui Consultants for a referral. "Word of mouth is good, as is checking if the person is registered or trained by some sort of association," says Elizabeth Wiggins, president of the Association of Feng Shui Consultants. "Ask the consultant for references so you can find out what their previous clients got out of the session."

According to Elizabeth Wiggins, president of the Association of Feng Shui Consultants, the first step is to clear any physical clutter. "Every piece of clutter in your house is attached to you energetically like a string, so you have to be ready to let go in order for your space clearing to work," she says.

Before arriving at your home, a practitioner will discuss what you want to achieve, whether it's more harmonious relationships, increased prosperity or cutting ties to the past. Once on-site, they will engage with the energy of the home, sensitising their hands by rubbing them together and walking through each room. "If I come across an area with stagnant energy or linked to a traumatic event, the feeling on my hands immediately becomes fuzzy and thick," says Lovelock. "You're literally feeling blocks, it's quite palpable."

The purification or banishing ceremony may involve many tools and techniques from smudge sticks, resins and incense to African drums, Japanese singing bowls and clapping. Different sound vibrations help break up stagnant energy, but smudging is believed to purify and lift the vibration of the space.

Clients are encouraged to take part in the ceremony for more powerful results. "It can be a very noisy process as we go through each room ringing bells or banging drums to force old energy out, but people really enjoy it," says Jones. "I also ask them to read aloud what



it is they want to rid from their home, which assists with the healing process."

### Invocation and infusing

Once all stagnant energy has been shifted, it's time for the invocation ritual – that is, an opportunity to fill the home with positive energy. A practitioner may suggest creating a central point or 'altar' in advance, which symbolises what you want to bring in – for example, a collage of happy snaps or symbols of love. You may meet at this central point, light a candle and read your invocation of what you wish to bring into the home. "The more detail you include the better, and it should always be phrased in the present tense so it feels real," suggests Wiggins.

After the invocation, the infusing ceremony takes place. "This is similar yet, in some degrees, opposite to the banishing," says Jones.

"We've wound the energy up, so now we go around the house in the opposite direction to bring it back in." More subdued than the banishing ceremony, infusing involves progressing through each room with space clearing mists, incense, Tibetan bells and harmony balls to instil positive energy into the space. Sealing the energy is also important. Lovelock does this by closing each room with an infinity sign (the number eight on its side). The final step is the closing ceremony which may involve a meditation, prayer or giving thanks to the household spirits and guides.

### Setting change in motion

After a space clearing session, practitioners say the energy of a home generally feels lighter, colours look brighter and sounds are crisper and clearer. On an emotional level, the changes that transpire in people's

lives can be dramatic. Lovelock cites a space clearing she did on a run-down old house. "Not long after the consultation, the family knocked down all the walls in the house – it was like the session propelled them to create a new space."

In another case, Jones did a consultation for a couple who both quit their jobs shortly after to pursue new opportunities, one as a sculptor and the other running a consultancy from home. Sometimes, the emotional aftermath of space clearing can involve a 'healing crisis', as in the case of one couple who were about to call off their engagement.

"The three weeks after the consultation were quite challenging for this couple, since the space clearing brought all their deep-seated issues to the surface," reflects Jones. "By the time they reached the fourth week, they had insight into their inner workings and are now happily married." ◊

## How much does it cost?

The price range falls between \$90 and \$450, depending on the size of your home and the duration of the session. Space clearing sessions can last anywhere between one-and-a-half to four hours.