

“Have you ever noticed how some rooms exude a certain energy, warmth, and a harmony of spirit? If you have, then you have experienced the language of the home. A language softly spoken, and universally understood.”

—Charlotte Moss,
interior designer



Room Makeover

Combine color, texture, glue, and paint to develop some serious DIY flair! Look around for a room that inspires you (a bedroom, study nook, corner of a family room) and use this badge to discover the design concepts and fix-it tactics needed to turn a simple space into a creative statement.

Steps

1. Gather ideas and inspiration
2. Paint something
3. Sew or glue something
4. Redo something
5. Build something

Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I'll know how to do a fast, fun, and thrifty room makeover.

Use Makeover!

A makeover can also include changing the way you use a space—or making it possible to do new things. Here's an activity Girl Scouts have enjoyed in recent years:

1. Use measuring tape to find out your room's dimensions.
2. Use a pencil and graph paper to draw a layout of your room in which one inch equals one foot.
3. Measure your furniture and create paper cutouts that are to size (one inch equals one foot).
4. Rearrange the cutout "furniture" to see how many ways you could set up your space.
5. Make a list of what is most useful about each layout and what causes problems.
6. Then rearrange your real room using the layout that was most useful.

Let's start with a "decorator's survey" of a room you would like to change. See it as an empty box, with no furniture, no color, no radiators, no glass in the windows, no paint, nothing!

—Girl Scout Handbook, 1953

Tips Before Takeoff

- ▶ **Make sure you have permission to make your space over.** Also confirm permission before starting each specific project!
- ▶ **Be careful of lead paint in anything you strip**—if the object was likely painted before 1978, use a simple lead-detection kit before moving forward.

STEP 1 Gather ideas and inspiration

Assess your space and get ideas for your makeover. Do you want to give the room a theme, like "the rain forest"? If not, how will your projects coordinate? Spend two hours on one of the following, and remember, these are opportunities to build your network of coaches to guide you through the steps in the badge.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- Craft an inspiration board.** Attach anything that inspires your color, texture, and design ideas—fabric swatches, paint samples, photographs from magazines—to a piece of cardboard to see how they fit together.

FOR MORE FUN: Take a home tour, or attend real estate open houses or furnished model homes to see how people decorate.

OR

- Shadow an interior designer or attend a decorating course.** Check with a home improvement store—some offer basic interior design classes. You might explore space relationships, how to use color and lighting to set a mood, or how textures can create themes and patterns in a space.

OR

- Look at design around the world.** A design idea often has a cultural origin. Japanese sometimes sleep on tatami mats that allow a room to be a space for both a gathering and sleeping. Canopies in Moroccan bedrooms were once used to keep bugs away. Examine one culture's design ideas for inspiration.

FOR MORE FUN: As girls did to earn the Art in Home badge in 1980, find out how people from a culture other than yours decorate their homes for one of their holidays. Make or demonstrate how to make one decoration or craft you have learned.

Every step has three choices. Do ONE choice to complete each step. Inspired? Do more!



FENG SHUI

Feng shui is an ancient Chinese practice that instructs how to place objects in a home to improve the flow of positive energy—called “chi”—and make an environment more harmonious. Many feng shui principals have influenced designers and architects.

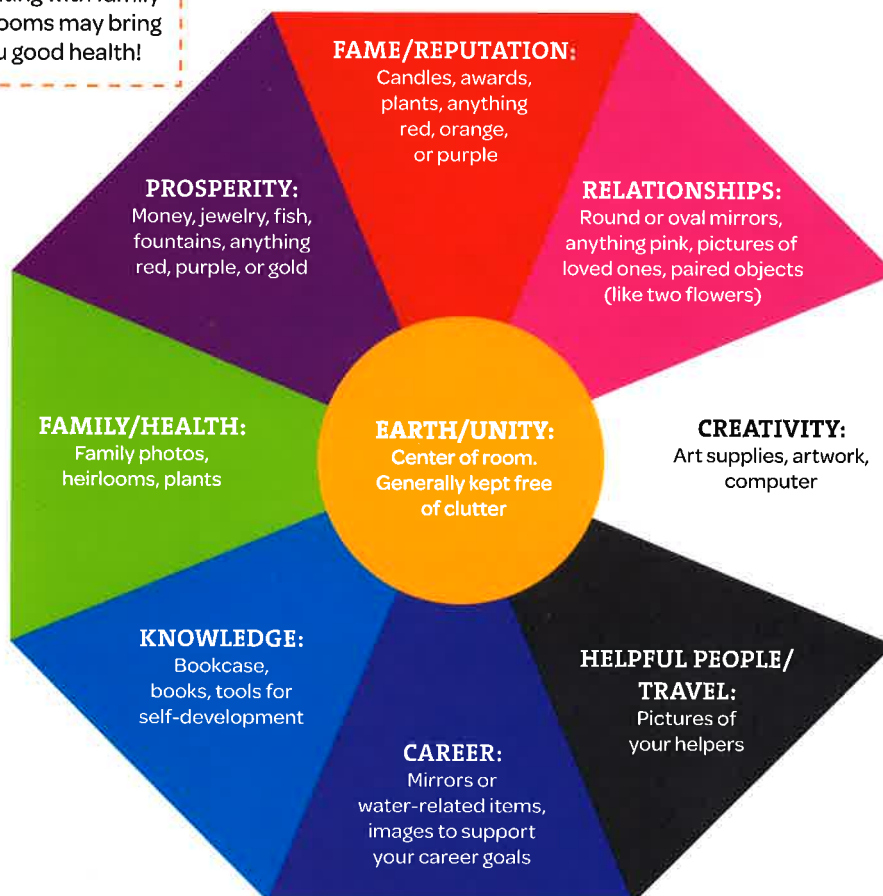


“Baguas” are maps of a room’s nine energy areas that help guide feng shui practitioners.

Feng shui can help you find the best spot for a table or desk.

Here are some objects that might help you attract more of what you need in each area of a room:

Decorating with family heirlooms may bring you good health!



STEP 2 Paint something

Choose something to paint. See the sidebar for tips, and ask for advice from experts and help from friends—especially if you're planning an ambitious project.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- Paint a wall.** Go to a home-improvement or paint store and talk to an expert about the differences between oil-based, acrylic, and water-based paints. Bring color swatches home to consider for your project. Research paint tricks online or in design magazines.

FOR MORE FUN: Paint a mural or trompe l'oeil.

OR

- Paint furniture.** Use one of your pieces or something from a flea market or thrift shop. Older objects sometimes need special preparation before painting. (Make sure the object was not originally painted with lead paint.) Find out when you would apply enamel, wood stains, and varnish. Decide whether to use a roller, brush, or spray paint.

OR

- Paint accents.** What about shelves, molding, window frames, or a lamp base? Or you might want to paint a canvas to hang that complements your room's color scheme. Before you start, research color wheels online and find out about complementary and contrasting colors. Base your color choices on what you learn.

More to Explore

Experiment with wallpaper. Instead of paint in some piece of your space, find out how to hang wallpaper as girls earning their Handywoman badge in 1940 did. Select some paper and cover something large enough so you can gain an understanding of the technique (a box, the inside of a bookcase, etc.).



Painting Basics

You can follow these steps whether painting a wall or piece of furniture.

- 1. Remove hardware.** This might be a light switch on a wall or drawer pulls on a dresser.
- 2. Choose your tools:** paintbrush or roller? Will you want a water-based, oil-based, spray, or latex paint? Will you need a primer or base coat?
- 3. Use drop cloths or spread out newspaper in your work space.** (Everyone drips or spills, even professionals.) Allow your first coat to dry before adding a second one, if needed.



Tips:

- **Don't paint over cracks in walls.** Fill holes and cracks with spackle. For furniture, you might need to strip it using a professional liquid wood stripper and sand it down to make it smooth enough to hold the paint.
- **No need to clean your brush when you need a break.** Simply wrap it in a plastic bag and put it in the freezer. Thaw for one hour before using again.
- **Use special care with paint thinner, turpentine, and other chemicals.**

If you have love for strong color, introduce it into your bedroom in small areas: a rose-colored pillow, a brilliant colored jar, or a bright wastebasket; but do not choose an orange bedspread, hangings, pillows, and dressing table cover. You will tire of too much color.

—Girl Scout Handbook, 1933

The Psychology of Color

Decorators often turn to these color “personalities” when deciding how to paint a room.



calming



cool and restful



vibrant and dramatic



lively, especially for dull rooms lacking sunlight



warm

STEP

3 Sew or glue something

Look around your space and think about what you can create to help lift the environment. Find out about a community center sewing class or a fabric store that offers sewing clinics and/or machines you can use to work on your project. Sew or glue together one of the following.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- Curtains for windows or to delineate new space.** For instance, you could turn an unused corner into a cozy study nook. You'll want to consider where and how you'll attach curtain rods—or devise another creative way to hang your curtains!

OR

- A table runner, decorative wall hanging, or throw rug.** You might find remnants for cheap or free at a fabric store to sew together, or you could recycle old T-shirts, bedspreads, sheets, and tablecloths.

OR

- A pillow cover or duvet cover.** You might do this activity Girl Scouts enjoyed in recent years: Invite a clothier, dressmaker, tailor, or fashion design student to advise your group on stitching. While creating a personalized pillow, practice four kinds of stitches: backstitch, blanket (also known as “buttonhole”), cross-stitch, and running stitch.



One of the most exciting things about interior decoration is the taking of an old piece of furniture and refinishing it yourself.

—Girl Scout Handbook, 1953



STEP 4 Redo something

Refurbish, repurpose, repair, refinish, reupholster—take something you already have and make it new.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

Refurbish one item. Perhaps you could:

- Update an old dresser by switching out the drawer pulls or changing the legs.
- Dye or tie-dye a curtain or bedspread a different color.
- Find a metalwork expert to help you bend and wire old cutlery to drawers to use as pulls.

OR -----

Repurpose one item. What about:

- Varnishing an old door to transform into a table.
- Painting chalkboard or dry-erase paint on a door or dresser top to be used for family memos.
- Turning old dresser drawers and bricks into a shelf.

OR -----

Repair one item. You might:

- Recane a broken chair seat or back.
- Learn how to use wood putty to fill in gouges or holes in wood furniture and then refinish the piece.
- Repair a broken shelf on a bookcase, or a broken or stuck drawer.

Tip: You can make a paint job look nearly new by painting over dings and dents in baseboard trim, door trim, and anything white. Or use a wood marker to color in dings and dents in chair legs.

More to Explore

Do what Senior Girl Scouts in 1963 did as part of their “Project: Handywoman.” Under the guidance of an electrician, rewire a lamp, or replace a plug on a lamp cord or appliance cord. Learn how to distribute electrical appliances throughout a house so that there is safe distribution of the electric current load. Find out the electrical capacity of your space, where the heavy-duty cables are, which outlets are on which line.



STEP

5 Build something

Bring some flair to the room with an object that wasn't there before. If you'd like to bring some nature inside, use this step to build something for a plant or flowers. (Think hanging plants, floating flowers, or a wooden or metal sculpture that incorporates a planter.)

CHOICES - DO ONE:

- Build something out of wood or metal.** It might be a simple wooden bench or desk, a side table, a headboard, a picture frame, framed mirror, or room divider. What about a metal magazine rack, coat rack, candleholder, or jewelry holder?

FOR MORE FUN: Prep and paint or finish your piece.

OR -----

- Build something from found items.** Try a simple table from an old wagon or sled, shelves constructed from old books, or a curtain rod made out of a ski.

OR -----

- Build an art piece.** Maybe a vase, bowl, or planter from clay, a decorative sculpture from wood or metal, a woven basket, or a window box?



Careers to Explore

Interior designer
Architect
Industrial designer
Computer graphics designer
Green building designer
CAD specialist
Style reporter
Structural engineer
Civil engineer
Lighting designer
Architectural photographer
Sociologist
Regional or city planner
Facility manager
Realtor
Mechanical engineer
Acoustical engineer
Energy conservation specialist
Historical preservationist
Product designer
Land surveyor
Furniture designer
Set designer

A Few Design Terms

Accent colors: for furniture, paint, carpet, drapes, and more; used to pull together a decorating theme

CAD/CADD: computer-aided drafting and design

Crown molding: molding installed where the wall and ceiling meet

Distressed: an uneven or worn appearance

Faux: French word for "fake"

Finish: final treatments, such as coating, stain, and paint

Motif: dominant theme of a project

Ornamental: decorative objects that are beyond function

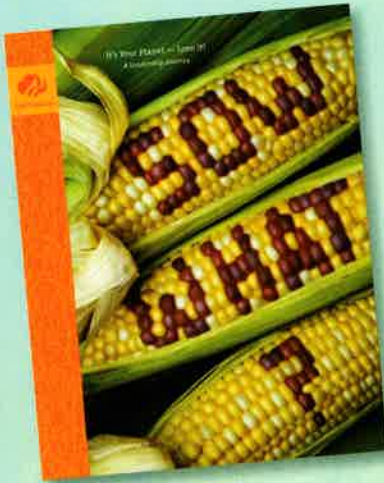
Patina: a sheen that develops with age or constant handling

Scheme: interior design ideas, design, theme

Trompe l'oeil: painted architectural effects (means "mistake of the eye" in French)

Veneer: paper-thin sheet of wood that sometimes covers furniture

Window covering: blinds, shades, curtains, or anything decorative applied to windows



Add the Badge to Your Journey

Where do you often have a meal or snack? Could the space use a special centerpiece? A little rack for a favorite tea set? Cushions for chairs? Something that reminds you to give thanks? See what adding some flair does for your meal experience.

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Doing a thrifty makeover for the community room at the library or a reading room at the elementary school
- Helping a friend or family member learn the skills to make a space over in their vision
- Volunteering to spruce up a college dorm room or a first apartment for a family friend

I'm inspired to: