



Save your skin

Mehndi may have serious side effects, doctors say

DURING THIS FESTIVE season, applying 'mehndi' (henna) on the hands can cause serious side effects as it contains chemicals that causes skin infections, doctors said, cautioning women against using it.

Mehndi dermatitis cases are on an increase in the city of Delhi, said Rohit Batra, dermatologist at Sir Gangaram Hospital in New Delhi.

"We are getting 8 to 10 patients every day with serious side-effects after applying mehndi on their hands," he added.

He advised women not to use mehndi as it causes irritation and leaves scratch marks, which can have a life-long impact on the skin. He added that mehndi agents do not use plain henna but add harsh chemicals to make it darker.

Skin infections due to mehndi cause

swelling, itching and redness. Batra said that as soon as people notice such symptoms, they should visit a doctor to avoid any serious consequences.

"At the initial stages, mehndi can cause acute dermatitis if one does not see doctor immediately and the allergy can spread all over the body," Batra added.

Sachin Dhawan, dermatologist at the Skin and Smile Clinic in Gurgaon, said that mehndi can even cause cancer.

"It is better to use natural or plain henna instead of the synthetic one. Synthetic mehndi can leave permanent marks on the skin and can even cause cancer," Dhawan said.

He added that as a precaution, one should buy only good quality mehndi and not apply it repeatedly. *IANS*



ALIGN YOUR LIFE

Clear your space

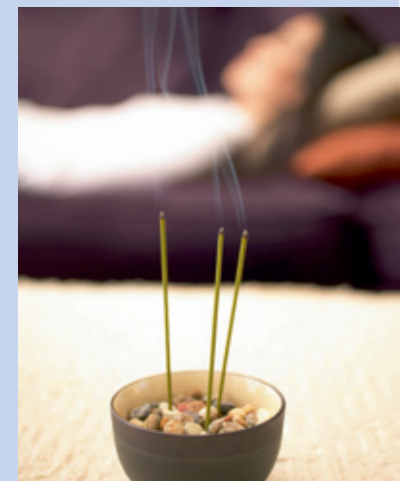
MANY YEARS AGO when I started working as a full time Feng Shui practitioner, I was dabbling in many well-being things to incorporate different modalities with Feng Shui. The subject that interested me the most at that time was space clearing. Having experienced the positive and powerful effects of space clearing personally, it became an integral part of my work. During a Feng Shui site visit, my initial focus is always on the interaction between space and the energy residing in it. Our space tends to absorb the energy around us, thereby taking on the role of a sponge. Our space absorbs all our actions, arguments, sorrows and happiness. Over a period of time the space is not only cluttered at vibrational level, but also at the physical level. That's when the energy begins to clog, leading to chaos in all aspects of personal and professional life.

Ask yourself - are you feeling tired often? Do you feel stagnated in your life? Do you suffer from frequent headaches when you are in a particular corner of your home or office? Do you feel heavy when you enter your home or office? If your answer is YES to any of the above questions, then you need to clear your space and open up your life. So what does space clearing mean? Space clearing involves clearing and enhancing energies in your immediate surroundings or in your building. It is an integral part of Feng Shui and must be practiced prior to implementing any Feng Shui remedies. Various techniques such as clapping, using sounds, lighting incense or use of lights can be used for clearing congested energies. Once these energies have been cleared, you will instantly feel different and a sense of calm will prevail in your surrounding. Following tips will help you to clear the stagnant energy from your home or office:

- A day in advance, clean your home - vacuum, dust, sweep, tidy up, wipe down surfaces, and remove clutter.
- Set your intention: where intention goes, energy flows. Take time to get clear and focused on what you want to accomplish in your space clearing ritual.
- Beginning at the front door walk around the room/house in a clockwise direction with a bunch of incense sticks or bakhoor.
- Let the smoke spread to all corners and areas that feel heavy or stagnant. Walk around a few more times in case you feel the energy is not clean.
- Place the incense in the center of the house and let it burn.
- Open all windows and let natural light and air circulate in the house.

The above cleansing ritual can be performed on a daily or weekly basis. Just remember, the more you clear your space, the more you open up your life to positive change and fulfilling opportunities.

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The Headstand - (Shirshasana)

SIRSHASANA IS THE first of the 12 basic postures of hatha yoga. It is said to be the most important of all. It has earned the nickname: king of asanas. Its benefits are numerous. The head standing posture benefits the endocrine glands and the digestive system. It helps to pump blood quickly to the heart and improves the flow of fluids through the lymphatic system channels, helping the body to absorb nutrients and eliminate waste more effectively.

TECHNIQUE

- Kneel down and place your elbows on the floor with your hands outstretched.
- Keep the elbows where they are and interlock the fingers in front of you. Elbows and hands now form an equilateral triangle.
- Place your head on the floor with the back of your head resting against the fingers.
- Straighten the knees, raise your hips, your body now resembling an inverted V. The weight should be about



equally distributed between your head/arms and the feet.

- Keeping your knees straight as much as possible, walk with little steps, bringing your feet as close as possible to your head. This will shift the weight from the feet onto the head/arms. Keep your back as straight as possible to prevent your neck from arching.



- Bend the knees keeping them close to the chest and your feet close to your buttocks. Shift the hips to keep your balance.
- Keep your knees bent and point them towards the sky.
- Straighten your legs now. Keep your feet relaxed. Make sure that the head is supporting no more than 10% of your body weight, the rest being

applied to the elbows. At first, hold it for 5 seconds. Increase gradually to 10 to 15 minutes.

BENEFITS

- Brings fresh blood to the brain
- Relieves pressure from the veins in the lower body (varicose veins)
- Encourages deeper breathing, therefore strengthens the lungs and increases one's vitality
- Relieves pressure in the lower back
- Improves physical balance
- Sharpens the senses
- Improves mental balance

CAUTION

- Avoid headstand if you have a headache, have a cardiac problem, suffer from hypertension, or are menstruating.
- Experts believe that if you are an expert at yoga and have been doing headstands for ages, then you might be able to continue even in your pregnancy. But please check with your yoga teacher and doctor.

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