

Your home has so much power



Ben Anders.

Michelle Ogundehin believes the design of our homes can positively affect our wellbeing. Mairi Hughes finds out more.

"If you want to aspire to be or do anything, if you have your home on side to help you, it will be a lot easier."

This is the mantra of Michelle's new book, "Happy Inside: How To Harness The Power Of Home For Health And Happiness".

Having spent years working on and editing various interiors magazines, Michelle believes our homes can help or hinder us greatly across every aspect of our lives.

HOW does your home look just now? Messy, tidy, cluttered, minimalist? Is it bright, dark, colourful, plain?

Michelle Ogundehin believes that the state of our homes has a bigger impact on us than we may realise.

It's out with "you are what you eat", and in with "you are what your home is".

"A home is the ultimate fortifying respite and sustaining retreat from the madness of the modern world," Michelle says.

"It's your place to recharge and reboot, your space to dust yourself down and get ready to seize another day.

"I've probably looked at thousands of homes, and interviewed so many people through the years," Michelle says.

"So often, I was seeing people's homes causing them all manner of stress and strife.

"If you are stressed out and disorganised, your home will reflect that, and vice versa.

"But in the same way, if

you then address your environment, you can cause that change in yourself.

"Your home has so much power; you can harness that power and put it to good use."

Michelle's book is a unique blend of interior décor and useful wellbeing advice.

"My belief is that these two things are completely and intimately entangled," Michelle says.

While editing "Elle Decoration" magazine, Michelle began to realise that, in order to achieve an organised and calm mind, it's important we start from the outside and work inward.

But how do we do this? We work out what we truly like, Michelle says, from colours to materials.

Throughout her career in interiors, she began to notice that people always seemed to be asking her the wrong questions about how to achieve the perfect home.

It is not, she discovered, about following the latest trends, or constantly spending a lot of money on high-end décor.

Similarly, there isn't one all-encompassing solution as to how we can create the perfect home.

Michelle feels that it is all about each individual taking a bit of time to



Focus on how your decor makes you feel as much as on how it looks.



Flowers can brighten any home – and mind!

Emma Harris.

have to work out what their personal taste is," Michelle explains.

"If you are into purple polka dots and glitter, then absolutely fantastic, if that's your thing.

"It's about the difference between value and cost.

"And quite often, value has very little to do with cost.

"The most treasured things in my home beyond anything with a pulse are probably worthless to anyone but me."

Michelle's book provides a guide to how people can

discover what their personal taste is, and how they can use that knowledge to create a happy home for themselves.

It's something of an antidote to what we are often told; we do not need to chase constantly after the latest "in" trend, but simply chase what makes us happy.

"It's to empower everyone to be their own interior designer, but based on the understanding that you can create a carefully considered home to

Create A Happy Home

Clear Your Hallway

"Whatever size or dimension of hallway you might have, just ask yourself, 'How do I want to feel when I first come home? When I cross my threshold, what do I see?'"

"We should never miss an opportunity to give ourselves a bit of an emotional lift. And that begins the minute you cross your threshold. It could be as simple as hanging a little picture there, or painting that wall bright yellow."

Good Vibes

"Surround yourself only with things that have positive meaning to you. So if you can't touch the floors or the walls or the ceilings, at least ensure everything that you possess has positive connotations."

Cushions

"You can never have too many cushions, but you've got to stick within your colour palette, otherwise you're just purchasing for the sake of it."

Rugs

"If you rent, it could be as simple as buying an offcut from a carpet retailer and getting it hemmed round the edges to make a really big room-sized rug.

"If you pick one hundred per cent wool and a colour you really like, that is something you can keep and resize and take with you on to the next place."



Emma Harris.

support your wellbeing," Michelle says.

The good news is that anyone can do this.

It doesn't matter if you live in a castle or a shack, as Michelle feels there are small steps everyone can take to create a home space that makes them feel happy.

"For most people, in terms of their home, their only concern is what their home looks like, as opposed to how it makes them feel," Michelle adds.

We should not worry about the aesthetic of our home in terms of how other people might think it looks,

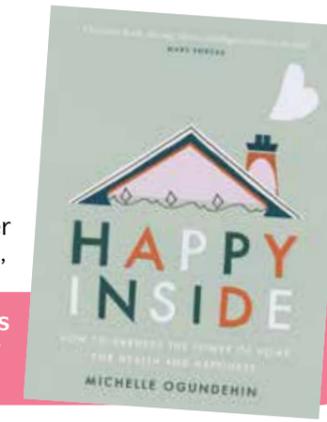
or if it is "chic".

It's about creating a happy space for ourselves.

"Even if you are time-poor, which many of us are, this is too important to disregard," Michelle says.

"Make time to fix your space and you begin to fix yourself." ■

Our homes have a big impact on our mental health.



You can buy Michelle's book in hardback now for £18.99.