



Augustin, who cites numerous studies that link natural light to boosts in mood and cognitive performance. "The home renovations and/or modifications that bring the biggest psychological returns on investment bring natural light into a space," she writes in her book *Designology*. Interior designer Cinzia Moretti, who employs biophilic design principles in a holistic approach to luxury design, considers room orientation and how her clients use their spaces in order to work with the cycle of the sun - brighter in the morning, warmer in the afternoon - throughout the day. To make the most of natural light, she advocates checking that heavy curtains do not block the light from windows, using mirror and high-sheen surfaces to bounce light around, and adding French windows, glass extensions and skylights, or even changing the design or sizes of windows.

Scenting our homes is another scientifically problem way to improve our well-being. "First, open windows, if you live in a place where the air smells good," says Augustin. "The next best scents are ones with which you have a positive associations, which varies from person to person. There is also research showing that particular scents have particular benefits: lemon for doing cognitive work, cinnamon/vanilla for enhanced creative performance and, of course, the smell of lavender to help us relax."

NATURAL CONNECTION

The second principle of biophilic design is to mimic or evoke a feeling of nature within a space, using colours, textures, patterns, materials and even technology. "Used in the right way, colour can elicit a positive response to a space that starts to shape the way we feel in it," says Heath. "We react well to colours with which we associate positive experiences and, for many of us, those experiences are found in nature. So the theory suggests that blues remind us of cool, calm pools of water and, as a result, are more calming and relaxing. Greens are more creative and stimulating, because they remind us of the fresh shoots of spring; yellows are warming and welcoming because they remind us of sunshine and crops, and reds and oranges are often a little more stimulating because they remind us of bright fruits and berries." Augustin adds: "The question I get asked all the time is what colour to paint a home office, and the answer is a shade of green, because green has been linked to enhanced performance. Red, on the other hand, degrades our analytical performance. Pink is calming, and there's a particular shade of yellow/green that reminds us of bile, so it might not be the best colour for, say, a guest bedroom."

Our reactions to texture, pattern and materials is interesting. "As a species we do well in a space with moderate visual complexity," ▶

OPPOSITE PAGE A relaxing spot to enjoy the warmth of the winter sun and contemplate the surrounding gardens, this room, designed by Studio Indigo, is full of both nature and sunlight.

TOP Fostering a connection with the outside, natural world is a key element of biophilic design. And what could be nicer than a view over the garden while bathing? This relaxing master bathroom in a calming shade of pink was designed by Joanna Wood.

LEFT Overlooking an abundance of greenery, this bathroom blends a carefully considered palette of neutral colours and natural materials. Notting Hill House project by interior design studio Albion Nord.