

## SHOVEL-READY PROJECTS FOR THE 12 ASTROLOGICAL HOUSES

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The economic stimulus bill Congress passed in February 2009 placed a priority on shovel-ready projects to rebuild our infrastructures. We have a stimulus plan too, though we don't have funds to back it.

Each of you can undertake projects during the coming year to rebuild infrastructures in your own life. In this version, priorities will be set by planetary events that we're collectively experiencing.

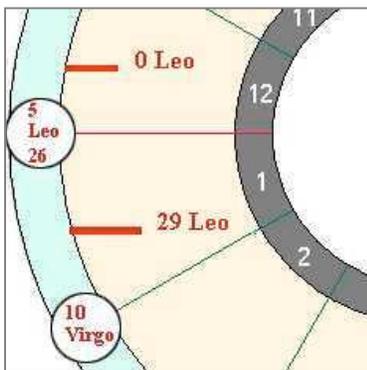
The blueprint you'll use is the houses of your astrology chart. This article is part 1 of 2 on shovel-ready projects to undertake while a planet tours the houses in your chart. We'll make suggestions for all 12, but they're only a guide. You alone know where priorities lie.

In all, three cycles that affect houses in your chart are kicking off within the next month—Mars' 3-month retrograde in Leo from 12/20/09-3/10/10, Mercury retrograde in Capricorn from 12/26/09-1/15/10, and the annual cycle of New Moons that starts with the January 15th New Moon at 10° Capricorn. The example we'll use to illustrate is Mars' 2-year journey through your 12 houses.



### Shovel-Ready Projects for Mars

In December, 2009, Mars turns retrograde and will remain in one or two neighboring houses through June, 2010. That area is likely to be a hot spot, and your priorities depend on which houses of your chart hold the sign Leo.



For the best use of that highly concentrated energy burst, find where transiting Mars is in your chart. The illustration shows how to find it in a sample chart. Scan the signs and degrees on house cusps, locate the house that contains 0° of Leo and then determine which house contains 29° Leo. Those are areas to focus on while Mars is in Leo. (Note: you probably won't find 0° or 29° Leo on your own cusps—we're just showing where they fit in the particular example.) If you're lost altogether, start by reading [Mars Retrograde 101—Answering your Questions](#).

However, this isn't the end of Mars' effects on you. Once it moves forward, it tours the other 11 houses for two months each. That's long enough to complete a shorter-term project for each house. Apply elbow grease to each in turn, capitalizing on Mars' boundless energy. In two years, you'll go a long way toward putting crucial infrastructures into better shape. The process is similar for any planet's cycle through the houses—for instance, a Mercury retrograde period begins on December 26th as well.

## Ideas for Houses 1-6

The first six houses make up the Northern Hemisphere of your chart. This sector represents the moment we were born—our personal sunrise—and the subconscious motivations and values we'll use as tools when we enter public life. It lays the foundation for the adult we'll become. These houses give us lessons on how we'll eventually interact with the world at large—the focus of houses 7-12.

Below are areas of life represented by houses 1-6, followed by suggestions to enhance each one.

**First house:** First impressions and first approach to situations, appearance, image, self-presentation, the basic physical vehicle. The first house is your personal sunrise—the way you meet the world—and creates a sense memory of you for everyone you meet.

- Write a story about yourself that begins with “I AM...”
- Pull together a photographic retrospective of yourself over the years to see how your style has changed
- Adapt your appearance to accurately reflect the real you in the here and now
- Be an authentic representative of your Sun
- Do a full body scan for health-related issues
- Tone up—your carriage and your muscles
- Train yourself to walk into a room with confidence
- Make direct eye contact when interacting with others

**Second:** Money and ways of earning it, money management and attitudes toward finance, things valued more than money. A valuable long-term project would be to create an updated spending plan that works, through the following steps:

- Keep track of everything you spend for one month
- Discover where wasted money goes
- List small luxuries that make you feel rich
- List economies that would make you feel poor
- Based on the collected information, draft a spending plan
- Repeat the list from step one on and keep revising the plan realistically
- Set up a small monthly automatic transfer from checking to savings
- Budget your time to include things you value more than money
- Know that your self-worth is more important than your net worth

**Third:** Communication, thinking and learning style, siblings and near relatives, neighbors, basic coursework, commuting.

- Get in touch with people you've lost track of, including yourself
- Think about what you're NOT communicating—starting at home
- Write an actual hard-copy letter to someone you've missed
- Phone a long-lost relative or neighbor to catch up on the news
- Go to a bookstore for coffee rather than Starbucks. Browse
- Subscribe to a blog or newsgroup on a topic you want to know more about
- Stretch by putting the Word or Quote of the Day on your startup page
- Cancel or transfer subscriptions to magazines you don't read any more
- Buy a blank book and keep a journal of 2010—we live in interesting times



**Fourth:** Home and home life, roots, family ties, heredity, family influence, the nurturing parent, senior years.

- Get to know your family tree even if it's your adoptive family
- Plant yourself in a nurturing environment, become self-watering
- Create a sacred space that travels with you
- Make peace with your past
- Feed yourself what you need most
- Become a caregiver to yourself as well as others
- Identify your tribe
- Develop sensitivity for what each person needs to thrive
- Create a recipe for emotional growth—a little more of this, a little less of that

**Fifth:** Children, romance, creativity, self-expression, performing, leisure activities, gambling and other forms of risk-taking.

- Put on your clown shoes and have some fun
- Be a lover not a fighter
- Develop generosity of spirit
- Praise someone who needs it
- Applaud those who deserve it
- Be fearless in an adverse situation
- Tell yourself and others that you love them
- Send someone flowers who won't expect them

- Give someone or something a chance
- Look for joy everywhere

**Sixth:** Work and its meaning, work habits, types of jobs, coworkers and employees, health and health habits.

- Look at each work task and consider how to do it more effectively
- Read David Allen's [Getting Things Done](#) or his [Free Articles](#)
- Listen to coworkers' or employees' suggestions and priorities
- Spend quality time offsite with coworkers—a non-working lunch
- Devise time-effective ways of getting regular exercise
- Have an annual physical and actually listen to the recommendations
- Read up on your medications on the web
- Research vitamins, supplements, herbs and natural treatments you need
- Evaluate your diet and make it more nutritious
- Stop gritting your teeth—it's the Virgo house of your chart!

### **The Cycle Continues....Moving on to Houses 7-12**



The passage of any planet through the first six houses prepares you for your world premier. You've been discovering and developing the inner you. You've become sentient and recognize yourself in a mirror. You've learned which things you own that cannot be taken from you, how to communicate with others, discovered your roots, the key to your heart, and how to serve and work with others.

Part 2 of this article puts you in the world arena, starting with the seventh house. The spotlight will now focus on how you interact with everyone else and how you blend your motivations, talents and skills with theirs. It will give you ideas on how to interact with the world at large and then bring it all back home again. We'll concentrate more specifically on the retrograde phases of planetary cycles and on the current Mars retrograde period in particular.

## Shovel-Ready Projects for Houses 7-12

There are a variety of astrological cycles that affect each of the 12 houses of your birth chart in turn. Understanding the cycles and using them improves your sense of timing, so you can keep tabs on your life and take care of important concerns as they arise. The dozen divisions of the circle each have several meanings but between them, all the major areas of life are covered.



Following the natural rhythm of the planets reduces stress and makes your efforts more effective. As we learned in [part 1](#), three cycles are kicking off within the next month—Mars' 3-month retrograde in Leo from 12/20/09-3/10/10, Mercury retrograde in Capricorn from 12/26/09-1/15/10, and the annual cycle of New Moons beginning 1//15/10.

What we're looking at here are ways to use your chart consciously to create your own personal stimulus package with the shovel-ready projects you need most. We covered the houses 1-6 of your astrology chart in Part 1, and now we'll look at the other hemisphere—houses 7-12.

Let's focus on Mars' stationary and retrograde periods like the one we're experiencing just now. The six months total that it's in Leo will give you an unusual burst of energy to tackle big projects that might have been needed for years. They're a window of opportunity to tackle long-standing obstacles to a more productive and fulfilled life. Roll up your sleeves and do battle with clutter—real or metaphorical.

If Mars is going retrograde in one of your first six houses, see [part 1](#), Shovel-Ready Projects for Houses 1-6. If it will spend the next several months in houses 7-12, you'll find more information here. We'll review the concerns of each of those houses and present a few suggestions—they may not be the exact choices you'd make, but they'll get you thinking. (If you need help in finding where Mars is in your chart, see [Mars Retrograde 101—Answering your Questions.](#))

### How to Approach a Retrograde Period

If we consider a planet's forward motion as masculine, retrograde motion can be viewed as feminine. During retrograde periods, like the upcoming ones for Mars and Mercury, try taking a more feminine, receptive approach to your projects. When Mars retrogrades, embrace the Tao of Mars. Instead of doing, just be. Let it sit for a while. Don't bang your head against a wall. Let things come to you. This is resting, reflective energy—not *gung ho, let's get it done now!* That's for after the second station, when the planet moves forward again.



Let's suppose Mars is retrograde in your first house, so you decide to do something different with your hair or wardrobe to make your appearance more authentic to your real tastes. During the first passage of Mars, you may get the idea for a makeover, but you know the retrograde is coming.

Hold off for awhile. Don't give in to the urges and impulses just yet. Flip through magazines for ideas on haircuts, consider colors that comfort or stimulate you, clothing styles that put you at ease. Try things on in styles you've dismissed in the past. But don't buy, don't put the scissors to your hair just yet. Sit with it. When the retrograde period is over, you'll have done your research and made some necessary adjustments. What you've avoided is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

Another way to think of this comes from the old joke, "How do you get to Carnegie Hall? *Practice, practice, practice.*" Retrogrades put you in the rehearsal phase before your big premier. No matter what the planet, sign, or house...practice, practice, practice. Get to know the part you play. Listen to the other players. Learn to be at ease on the set. Observe the action around you on this stage, in this area of your life. Become comfortable with the script. Then give it everything you've got.

## Projects for Houses 7-12

The Southern Hemisphere is made up of houses 7-12 and comprises the top half of your chart. This sector represents how you use the skills you've developed in houses 1-6 to interact as an adult with the world at large. It begins in house 7 with your important relationships. It is here that you must learn the team skills that will be the foundation for all mature associations.

In this hemisphere hangs the guiding star that lights the way of your own unique path. It shows us the world that lies beyond our own door, how to be a steward for others, and the way toward creating bonds that live beyond our own mortality. It defines our code of ethics and our personal quest, teaches us how to lead without force, and how to be a good friend and neighbor. It eventually brings us home to the loving and compassionate spirit we can call peace.



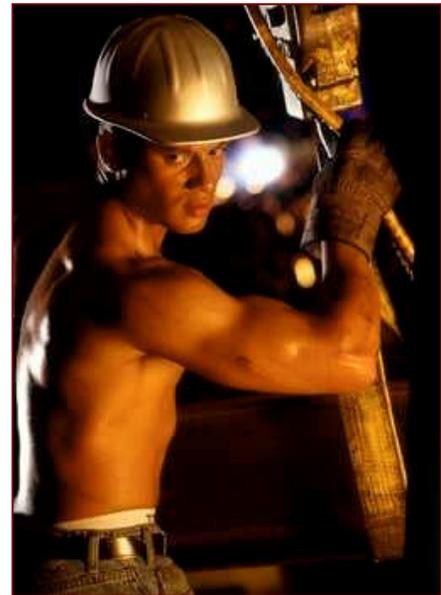
**Seventh:** Partnerships—personal and business, close, committed relationships, types of people we attract, sharing.

- Keep your promises
- Get a really good mirror ~ a looking glass for inner or outer gazing
- Identify the solid relationships in your life and why they do or don't work

- Find the romantic you that serves the beloved
- Respect yourself and others
- Look for the lopsided and bring balance to it
- Listen to someone else's story without judgement
- Choose your battles
- Learn to barter so that everyone wins
- See yourself through the eyes of others
- Commit to something or someone
- Turn your enemies into friends
- Set standards for yourself as a role model and seek them in your partners

**Eighth:** Sexuality, money you don't earn (inheritances, grants, etc), taxes, partner's resources, birth, death, transformation, healing.

- Reveal a secret that will heal a wound
- Get and keep your insurance papers, deeds, and other important documents in order
- Recycle things you no longer need
- Read the Kama Sutra
- Learn the art of intimacy
- Treat the treasures of others as truly valuable
- Resurrect something that longs to live
- Memorialize someone who has passed away
- Let go of lingering resentments
- Have a release ceremony for something you mourn
- Leave a legacy behind



**Ninth:** Higher education, advanced studies, religion and philosophy of life, legal matters, foreign lands, distance travel. (Course work of one kind or another is common while this house is emphasized, but focus on learning skills that further your career goals.)

- Take a refresher course to update skills for your work
- Take a month to reread those favorite books on your shelves
- Reread an inspirational or self-help author who helped you in a bad time
- Write to or about a teacher who brought out the best in you
- Do a gratitude list each day for a week, a month, or more
- Pick a spiritual practice and do it daily for a week, a month, or more
- List 10 things you firmly believe—then write why they might not be true
- Attend a service for an unfamiliar religion...or one you no longer belong to
- Watch the travel channel or a travelogue about a land you want to visit
- Learn a foreign cuisine, and read best sellers from that country
- Plan for and make a pilgrimage, if only in your mind

**Tenth:** Career and long-term goals, how you are remembered, parental authority, bosses and the type of boss you are.

- Take an inventory of all the goals you've achieved
- Find or be a mentor
- List the qualities and standards that make you feel successful
- Analyze your parents as role models for your career
- Consider if you've become like your own parents with your kids
- Take your boss to lunch
- Be a good steward
- Get serious about something
- Establish an inner board of directors to make your decisions
- Lead by example



**Eleventh:** Friendship, relationship to peer group, the teenage years, group membership, social consciousness, activism, aspirations.

- Google college or high school pals to see what they're up to
- Do something thoroughly adolescent and silly—and revel in it
- Have a long phone chat to catch up with one of your dearest friends
- Instead of a present, give a friend the gift of your skills or presence
- Make amends to an estranged friend that you've hurt—expect nothing
- Analyze co-dependent ties for how you're enabling or being enabled
- Make a new internet buddy through a blog or forum with shared interests
- Analyze your groups to see how they enhance or detract from your goals
- Give back to groups that have helped you—volunteer for something
- Question authority—protest an injustice by taking an action

**Twelfth:** Things that are repressed or hidden, self-defeating behavior, chronic illness, chronic illness and care facilities, selfless service, retreats, spiritual quest.

- Take the phone off the hook for a weekend and contemplate your life
- Go on a spiritual retreat—organized or one you create for yourself
- Meditate daily for a week, however you are most comfortable
- Practice Random Acts of Kindness for a week or month
- Court dreamland revelations by journaling your nightly dreams
- Confess your worst secrets to a trustworthy person—in a confessional, perhaps
- List 10 ways you regularly shoot yourself in the foot and figure out why
- Make it a project to stop at least one of them
- Befriend someone who's suffering as you once suffered and overcame
- Visit someone in a hospital, prison, nursing home, or homeless shelter

(For more insight, read the series that starts here: [7 Secrets You May not Know about the 12th House.](#))

### **More Help in Using Astrological Cycles Effectively**

Astrological cycles are the spiraling path we travel to become the best person we can be. We all make mistakes and there's usually something we would do differently if we had the chance to go back and try again. Cycles give us the gifts of hindsight and foresight to improve our performance every time we run each planet's track.

Each astrological cycle gives us the opportunity to either walk around the "*same old, same old*" time and time again without advancing, or to raise our own bar, expect more of ourselves, and deliver. We are given another chance to learn from the past and use our personal history to make headway toward a more satisfying future. We become older and wiser, and we stop falling in the same holes again and again.

The entire journey is simply to get fully acquainted with ourselves and learn how each of us can be a better "me." When the cycle is completed and another cycle comes our way, we're armed with knowledge, experience, and a deeper understanding of the part we play in these great dramas we call the human condition and the evolution of consciousness. We may awake one morning in joy and amazement because we've found the answer to one of the most perplexing questions of all time, "What is the meaning of life?"

For more information on the 12 houses and on how to use Mars retrograde and other astrological cycles, here are some links to related articles on Donna's Blog, [Sky Writer](#) and CJ's Blog, [Auntie Moon](#).

- Download a chart blank here: [Blank chart with house meanings](#).
- Need More details on the 12 houses? Download: [AGSA ch13-houses](#)
- [Mars Retrograde 101—Answering your Questions](#)
- [Mars Mission 1: Mars and Conflict—Road Block or Productive Detour?](#)
- [Mars—What Great Minds say about Its Functions](#)
- [Mercury Retrograde Projects—Use the Energies Constructively](#)
- [12 Things to Do](#) (projects by sign)
- [Libra ~ Who am I? Who are You?](#)
- [Mars Retrograde ~ A Cosmic Do-Over](#)
- [Almanacs & Ephemerides Online](#)

Oh, and those shovel-ready projects Congress' stimulus plan was meant to finance. How have they worked out? See: [Stimulus Watch: Keeping an Eye on Economic Recovery Spending](#). Here's hoping your own stimulus plan works out way better!

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