

Five Elements for Better Health

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Feng Shui has never been more popular. News stories, magazine articles, and television shows are all talking about this ancient art. Though it has reached a wide audience, one important factor has been overlooked. The principles of Feng Shui are often understood as absolute rules instead of guidelines to be adapted to a particular space and set of circumstances.

The Los Angeles Times' "Hot Property" section carried an article about a house built in Malibu according to *perfect* Feng Shui specifications. *Perfect* meant that it faced south, towards the water and had appropriate rooms in the symbolic corners.¹ It was wonderful that someone cared enough to build a house this way, but the idea that this house was perfect missed the mark.

Traditionally, the Chinese proudly faced their building toward their vast imperial conquests which laid to the south. Fame and south became intrinsically linked. Based on the Bagua, south is also associated with the element fire. So, is this traditional southern orientation *perfect* for a home in Malibu?

Southern California is already full of fire. It has a hot climate; energetically, it is a very active place, not to mention the real fires that sweep through the area with regularity. What if the person who bought this *hot property* with *perfect Feng Shui* had heart disease? The owner would need to calm this energy down, not move into a house that augments it!

¹ Please refer to "The Bagua," p. 35.

The five Elements

The five element theory is a solid base of information. You can then take traditional Feng Shui principles and adapt them to your own needs. The ancient Chinese discovered that the world could be broken down into five energy types, and they were given archetypal names from nature: water, wood, fire, earth, and metal. The system not only described the principle energies, but it was used to understand smaller sub-systems such as: colors, shapes, textures, time, the human body, organs, and environments.

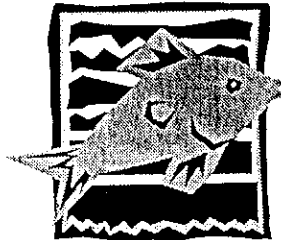
In Feng Shui, the five element theory is used to determine which element is dominant or deficient in a space. Cures, based on elemental correspondences, bring the elements back into alignment. Used as guides, the five elements can help you make positive energetic adjustments to your space according to your needs. The result is a balanced environment that heals and nurtures.

In the human body, all five elements are represented in a person's make-up, although one or more may be dominant. The manifestation of the elements is visible in the body's constitution, coloration, facial features, character traits, and habitual behavior. As with a space, the elements can be used as a tool to balance any disharmony.



Understanding the Five Elements

The first step to using the five element theory is to understand how each element manifests itself.

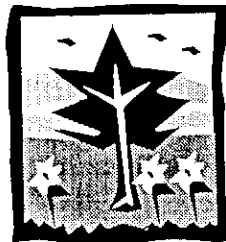


Water

The water element is present in a view of the ocean, lake, river, stream or swimming pool. It is amorphous, like a building that has been added on to so many times that it no longer has a defined shape. These buildings at times inspire creativity or even confusion.

People who are water types usually need to live near it. They have either large bones or wide hips, shadowing under their eyes and around their chins, depth of expression in their look, and either high, rounded foreheads or strong chins.

The colors associated with water are black and blue, the corresponding direction is north, and the organ is the kidneys.



Wood

The wood element can be seen with trees, in wood paneling and furniture, wood carvings, or plants. It is symbolized by tall columns which mimic the shape of trees. These buildings, such as high rises, multi-storied houses, and cabins, inspire growth and a connection between heaven and earth.

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People who are wood types usually have olive-colored skin and are either tall and angular like trees, or short and energetic like bushes. They have sinewy arms and legs and strong eyebrows or jaws. They are aggressive or assertive, direct, and have a strong temper and a lot of drive. Wood people usually love nature and have a lot of trees or plants in their environment.

The color of wood is green, the corresponding direction is east, and the organ is the liver.

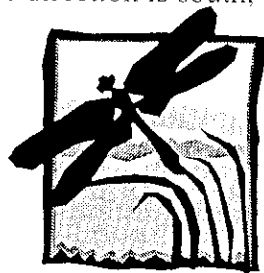


Fire

The fire element appears in angular designs with sharp edges and points as well as in structural features like fireplaces and barbecues. Buildings in the fire shape excite the mind and emotions and are good places to generate ideas. Many libraries and churches have these shapes.

Fire people are usually willowy with bright eyes, big smiles, and reddish coloring on the neck and chest. They are charming, fun, mischievous, easily excitable, and change emotional states rapidly. They love change, bright colors, and environments that stimulate.

The colors of fire are red and orange as well as pastel pink, purple, and peach, the direction is south, and the organ is the heart.



Earth

The earth element is represented by anything made from stone, brick, ceramics, tile, and adobe. Buildings made of these materials have heavy walls and by necessity are low to the ground. Earth buildings are excellent for holding onto things and keeping things safe. They are long

lasting, hard to damage, and promote stability, ideal for warehouses and museums.

People who have the earth element dominant in their constitution will have rounded limbs and soft flesh. They are warm, kind and look huggable. Earth women look like earth mothers, even when slim, and the men look like big bears. They have plump cheeks and generous mouths. They like to collect things and invariably have knickknacks around the house.

The colors of earth are brown, yellow, and clay colors, the direction is the center, and the organ is the stomach.



Metal

Metal is a dual element. It is well represented by the Chinese coin, round with a square hole in the center. Metal shaped buildings are either rounded: a dome, curved walls, or squared: very boxy and modern. These buildings bring money, an ideal shape for a bank. Houses with high ceilings and a lot of glass are also metal homes; metal is reflective and needs a lot of space.

Metal people love minimalism. They like blank walls and monochromatic color schemes because it calms their futuristic minds. They are organized, clean, and contained, living very simply or very regally. Physically, they are fair skinned with small bones, broad shoulders and prominent cheekbones. Aquiline features, long noses, and carved chins and jaws dominate their faces. They give things away easily because they do not like to accumulate things.

Metal colors are white and all metallic shades: gold, silver, chrome, brass and bronze. The direction is west, and the organ is the lung.

Balancing the Elements

Each person has a dominant element to their constitution that, if overemphasized, will eventually cause disharmony. If this primary element is overused, it overshadows the other elements and may lead to a deficiency or lack of the other elements. For example:

A man with a dominant metal element had always lived with glass, chrome, and a lot of windows. He went through changes that made him realize that he was lacking warmth in his personal life, and he realized that he was lonely. Metal environments can be stark and impersonal, so he started by adding fire colors. He began a collection of earthy objects to fill all the empty space around him. He learned to bring balance into his life by incorporating other elements into his environment.

Deficiencies are also evident when someone has an intense craving for a certain element. People tend to be unhappy without their dominant element around them.

One client was a definite water type; he had big bones and a lot of stamina. He was not getting enough of the water element from his environment, as his illnesses and injuries showed. His complaints: low back pain, knee injuries, and hearing problems, all signs of water deficiency in Chinese medicine.

I suggested he move closer to the water or add water to his environment with a fountain. His girlfriend began to laugh and told me that sometimes he was so obsessed with water that he would go home and turn on the faucets just to hear the sound of it! He quickly found a fountain for his home and office, (It is much more economical to recirculate a small amount of water than to run the faucets.), and he has had significantly better health ever since.

People crave the element that dominates their constitution as well as the element they need. Like the old game, Paper, Rock and Scissors, the five elements can *help* each other or *harm* each other, as is evident in their growth and destruction cycles. Water feeds wood, wood feeds fire, fire makes ash for earth, earth grows metal, and metal (minerals) becomes water. Conversely, metal cuts wood, earth blocks water, water puts out fire, wood uses earth, and fire melts metal.

It is crucial that people get fed by the mother element and avoid being harmed by the suppressive element.

A client wanted me to help him in the area of relationships. He explained that they always started hot and heavy but then washed out. This was definitely a fire and water problem! His house was missing his marriage and partnership corner.² Outside, where it should have been, was a waterfall and a barbecue: fire and water canceling each other out. In the kitchen, the marriage corner was a laundry area with a washer and dryer, fire and water again. In the marriage corner of the master bedroom, there was a fireplace and an aquarium, and in the master bath, a Jacuzzi and fire pit. Every place with fire, also had water.³

To fix the imbalance, we moved the barbecue to a different spot in the yard. In the kitchen, we made the laundry area into a pantry, moved the fish tank from the master bedroom and created a tropical rain forest garden in the fire pit location. Within a month, he began a relationship that is still rewarding to him three years later.

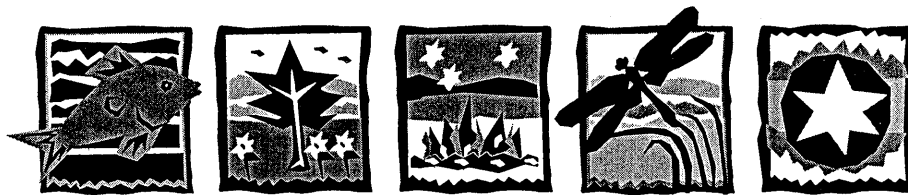
² Please refer to "The Bagua," p. 35.

³ I find this so coincidental in my practice. The greatest personal issues keep manifesting again and again in the space. It feels as if certain houses are selected to help play out some karmic responsibility.

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Working with the elements guarantees personalization of the Feng Shui principles. These cures can be used to balance a surplus or lack of any element. Be creative in the application of the elemental principles. Use your imagination and watch how healthy you become when the elements are balanced.

Five Element Feng Shui



	WATER	WOOD	FIRE	EARTH	METAL
Energy	Deep Secretive Mysterious	Active Driven Competitive	Alive Impulsive Scattered	Nurturing Kind Grounded	Cool Reserved Aristocratic
Body Parts	Kidneys Low Back Knees	Liver Tendons Upper Back	Heart Eyes Hands	Spleen Stomach Muscles	Lungs Skin Body Hair
Body Types	Big Bones Wide Hips	Tall/Sinewy Short/Energized	Slender Redness	Round Fleshy	Small Boned Fair Skinned
Facial Traits	Ears Forehead Chin	Eyebrows Browbones Jaws	Eyes Lips /Corners Lines	Mouth Cheeks Above Lips	Nose Cheekbones Moles
Emotions	Fear to Wisdom	Anger to Human Kindness	Excitement to Love	Worry to Instinct	Grief to Gratitude
Physical to Transformed Shape	Amorphous Curved Add ons	Tall Columns Tree/Bushes Skyscrapers	Angles Sharpness Corners	Low Heavy Permanent	Round Square Open
Colors	Black Blue	Green	Red/Pink Orange	Brown Clay	White Any Metal
Needs	Water Time Alone Creativity	Trees Plants Focus	Color Light/Heat Talking	Comfort Things Family	Order Purity Boundaries
Values	Truth Spirituality	Work Intensity	Fun Variety	Helping Stability	Past/Future Aesthetics



Excerpted from
The Feng Shui Anthology

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In *The Feng Shui Anthology*, when the **Bagua** is discussed, **only the Life-Aspiration Energies are mentioned** (except in Derek Walter's article.). **To work with the Bagua and to maximize your Feng Shui with the information of all the masters, you must include your 8) Best Directions and 9) Flying Star Energies.**

My step-by-step [Home Study Mastery Program](#)
(With its ★★★★★ "[Hidden Treasure Just Found](#)" review!)
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