

Decorating With Feng Shui

By Diane Alba-Means

Feng Shui (pronounced Fung Shway) is the ancient Chinese art and science of placement, which teaches that everything is alive, connected and always changing. It is based on the belief that vital energy, called Chi is flowing everywhere. Feng Shui as an art emphasizes the importance of the placement of objects in your surroundings to create balance and harmony in your life. By using these principles you can arrange, decorate and accessorize your home to promote health, wealth and happiness.

Feng Shui uses several tools to help enhance the flow of energy in your home or office. One such tool is called the Pa Kua or Bagua map, which divides your home or office into nine sections, each associated with a specific area of life, such as health, wealth, career and relationships. Another important tool, which is used hand in hand with the Pa Kua map, is the Five Element theory. The Five elements are derived from nature and are Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water. These are considered to be the building blocks of everything physical on earth. Feng Shui observes that we, as humans are made up of all five elements, and we are generally most comfortable when all the elements are represented in our surroundings.

The Five Elements are associated with shapes, colors and materials and can be introduced into a space in pure form, using actual plants, fire, soil, metal or water, or in the form of representative objects. The most powerful objects are those, which combine the shape, color and material of an element. For example, a square, terracotta pot filled with brown soil for earth energy.

In decorating or home or office, we can use the following guide to assist us in creating an elementally balanced environment.

Wood is represented by the color green. It can be found in all wood, plants, flowers and paper. The shape for wood can be found in columns and pillars. Examples would be a tall, green vase; a green picture frame, or a tall lamp with a paper shade.

Fire is represented by the color red, and is found in lighting, candles, fireplace, sunlight, animals, leather and wool. The shapes triangle, pyramid and cones signify fire. Examples would be star-shaped candleholders, oil lamps and red or animal print fabric.

Earth is represented with yellow and earth tones. It is found in the soil, ceramics, tile, brick and stucco. Its shape is represented with square, rectangles, and plateaus. Examples would be a clay pot with yellow flowers, a square plate or checkered fabric.

Metal is present in the colors of gray, white and pastels. It is found in all metals, such as gold, silver, copper, pewter, and brass. The shapes are found in arches, circles and ovals. Examples would be a round silver tray, a pewter pitcher or an oval brass frame.

Water is represented by the colors blue, black and dark tones. Water is found in a bubbling fountain, glass, crystal and mirrors. Asymmetrical or irregular shapes are a part of the water element. Examples would be a crystal vase, a mirror or black satin fabric.

These elements can be introduced in various forms to suit your own style of decorating. You might choose wallpaper with green vertical stripes to bring more uplifting wood energy, making the ceiling appear higher and the room more spacious. Red fabric pillows on a sofa will increase the fire energy, creating an exciting atmosphere. Yellow-checked curtains in the kitchen will enhance the earth energy, which will make the room feel cozier. A round, brass, metal bowl used, as an accent piece on a coffee table, will make it feel more complete and finished. A water feature in the entry enhances the water energy, conveying a peaceful flowing atmosphere.

Combining appropriate colors with particular patterns and materials can be especially effective in manipulating the existing energy, which is the basis of many Feng Shui remedies. When using these tools and surrounding yourself with things that you love, you are creating environmental affirmations which support you in having a peaceful place to live and a place for the vital energy to circulate harmoniously throughout your home.

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