

Demystifying Feng Shui



An Ancient Concept for a 21st Century Way of Life

Feng Shui is an ancient Chinese philosophy I've adapted for use in the twenty-first century. It actually works better today than it did 3,000 years ago because it provides you with a positive way to deal with twenty-first-century stressors and to create peace-filled sanctuaries in your home and workplace.

In fact, in this chaotic, instant-messaging, frantic world searching for hope, progress and positive change, the principles of Feng Shui probably have more relevance than ever.

A modern-day name could be *Energy Cultivation*—the use of positive energy in your personal environment to create calm and balance in your life, while still honoring *your* existing beliefs, such as your personal religious convictions.

For example, Christian families might have symbols of their religious faith placed throughout their homes, such as crosses or pictures and statues of Mary, Jesus, the Archangels and numerous saints. These symbols are an important source of positive energy in their homes and are automatically part of the energizing process for their families. Angels provide protective and supportive energy in children's bedrooms and in the public rooms of the home. Other religious symbols provide positive energy when placed in the center of the home and in family and/or living rooms. In those locations they serve as the foundation for the family's values and respect for others.

Jewish families often have a collection of menorahs in their homes and a *mezuzah* on the front doorpost to bless the entering of their home. They may have additional *mezuzot* on

other doors to bless their coming and going from those rooms as well. Again, these symbols, along with those observed by other religions, become part of the energizing process for these families in their homes.

Feng Shui supports the creation of positive energy by being inclusive of the existing beliefs, faith and principles already established in a home.

Energy to Support You

I often get asked the question, “What, exactly, is Feng Shui?” In order to dispel any misunderstandings or myths, I often answer by telling someone what Feng Shui is *not*. It is definitely not a religion, a cult, some type of magic or a bandage for fixing your life. Feng Shui is a way of life you choose in order to create balance and harmony in your personal environment so that you can bring about a better and more enjoyable future.

My simple definition of Feng Shui is the use of positive energy to bring about desired results, such as better health, more income, prosperity and abundance. The ancient Chinese studied and used Feng Shui every day of their lives to survive and to enhance well-being, longevity and prosperity.

But, you might ask, what does energy have to do with Feng Shui?

The answer is everything. The literal translation of Feng Shui is “wind and water”, two of the dominant energy forces on Planet Earth. Our bodies, our planet and our solar system are all related to each other and “glued” together with energy. Energy makes our world go round. The energy of the sun warms us and gives us light. The energy of wind blowing over the oceans gives us cool breezes and, when harnessed, can become one source for electricity. Gravitational energy keeps people grounded and prevents us from floating into outer space.

Our world is made up of energy. There is magnetic energy in the north and south poles, which is found when using a compass. There is the east–west movement of energy

as the earth rotates on its axis. There is heat energy from fire, cool energy from water, growing energy in trees and soil and energy that results when molten metal cools and is formed into tools, equipment and automobiles. Feng Shui energy is simply a way of harnessing some of that wonderful universe-energy and putting it to good use in our personal lives.

We all have personal energy as well. When you surround yourself with positive people, good ideas and things that please you, you feel really good about yourself because all of these positive things and people give you good energy. If you live in a dark home and surround yourself with “doom and gloom” people and pessimistic thinking, you find yourself depressed, discouraged and not feeling well because of the negative energy. A simple rule to remember is:

Positive energy contributes to your well-being.

Feng Shui utilizes positive energy to support you and your beliefs, to revitalize the soul, unclutter the home, eliminate negative self-talk. It helps people be more productive and fulfilled, both at home and in the workplace. It does so through the use of a number of basic principles.

First, and perhaps of biggest benefit, is the uncluttering of both your physical and emotional worlds to allow positive energy to enter. Another important aspect of uncluttering is that it helps you balance your surroundings, or personal environment. Then there’s the placement of household objects and art, which can provide additional balance and also energize areas of your life that seem to be stuck.

Your home can be transformed into a peaceful refuge from that frantic world outside, a place where you can find your balance again—a place that flows with positive energy. And when your home feels that way, your mind and body do as well. Your workplace can be transformed into space that enables you to focus better and to be more productive. When your workplace is filled with positive energy, it will also be filled with planned, intentional success.

The results? You're a calmer, more focused, more productive person. You get more pleasure out of life. You're better able to determine which things to keep and which to throw out...not only from your closet but from your life. Your home becomes a place of peace and harmony and a true refuge from the everyday pressures of the outside world. Your workspace becomes a place where preparation and opportunity meet.

Through this process, you'll learn to determine what you can control and what you cannot. You'll be better able to live in the Now, instead of worrying about past events that did once happen or possible future events that may never happen. You will, basically, create your own personal roadmap to living your life to the fullest.

The choice is really quite simple. If you want to feel well, have a bright outlook on life and find peace and happiness within, surround yourself with things you love and people that provide you with great energy. If some of these are not as good as you want them to be, you can use Feng Shui principles to improve them. I've divided some very basic Feng Shui principles into three options that you can use individually or at the same time.

Feng Shui Principles

Option 1: Calm Your Surroundings

The use of positive energy in one's personal surroundings and home can begin with a general balancing process employing the use of some basic Feng Shui principles. These principles universally apply to everyone and will provide the same general results—balancing and creating harmony.

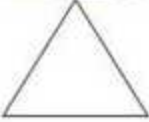
- Unclutter every room, closet and cupboard in your house and garage. Clutter can be anything from stacks of magazines and "stuff" you've collected over the years to clothing that no longer fits and Aunt Suzie's dishes you've never liked. *Get rid of them!*

- Do not replace the removed clutter with new stuff! Energy needs to meander slowly throughout your home and loves to find cleared open spaces in which to rest. That's how new ideas, better health and a better life begin, with new energy that lingers.
- Place your bed as far away from the entrance door to your bedroom as possible, just make sure your feet don't point out the door. This provides maximum positive energy and safety.
- Make sure your bed has nothing stored underneath it, so that when you sleep energy can completely circulate around your body, providing you optimal rest. This will allow you to wake up refreshed and re-energized.
- Paint your bedroom walls soft, soothing colors conducive to rest. Low-energy pastels are perfect bedroom energy.
- Leave all internal doors open throughout your home, whether a room is regularly used or not. Each room fulfills an energy sector within your house, therefore, it is important that energy passes through those areas even though they may not be used every day.
- Paint living room and kitchen walls slightly more energetic colors to encourage good nourishment of the body and mind. The slightly raised energetic value provides improved nutrition and positive interaction with family members.
- Prevent energy that enters your front door from shooting right through your home and out a window or door directly opposite it by using furniture or rug runners to re-direct the energy into other parts of the house. (If you can't do one of these, hang a thirty-millimeter, round ball, multifaceted crystal from the ceiling inside your front door.)
- Create a "quiet zone" in your home in a spare bedroom, basement or loft so that various members of the family can find a place of peace when they are in need of retreat from the cares and worries of the day.

Spend at least fifteen minutes three times a week in the “quiet zone” and ask others not to disturb you. We are a society bombarded with noise pollution and this is your escape.

- Locate the southeast wealth area of your home or living room and energize it with a money plant, good-luck indoor bamboo plant or a large upward-reaching plant. Be sure to keep this plant healthy. The moment it looks unhealthy, toss it and replace it immediately.
- Energize the southwest relationship area of your home with pictures of you and your family or friends having a great time together. This also works with business associates, improving work relationships.
- Place a bowl of fruit on your kitchen table or kitchen counter to energize abundance. (Yes, you can use good-looking, colorful faux fruit if you cannot possibly eat the fresh fruit before it would spoil.)
- Energize the north career/spiritual area of your home by placing a small water fountain there or a picture of a gently flowing stream or use the colors deep blue and/or purple. This works well for those searching for a new career, wanting improvement in their current career or searching spiritually for peace within.
- Be sure to keep all toilet seat lids and as many drains as possible closed to prevent energy from literally running down the drain.

Balance



Balance is about:

- What you surround yourself with
- Who you surround yourself with
- Choices you make in your daily life
- What you do to yourself physically
- What you do to yourself mentally

It is a learned trait which
provides peace and harmony through your surroundings
and provides peace within.

Option 2: Create Harmony Using Yin and Yang

People often ask me, “Do Yin and Yang have anything to do with Feng Shui?” Yes, Yin and Yang have *everything* to do with Feng Shui. They are used, in fact, in all philosophies and schools of Feng Shui. It is one of the primary principles behind Feng Shui in that proper Yin and Yang means perfect balance. For example, weather that is not too hot and not too cold could be described as perfect Yin and Yang. Another example would be a room that has the right proportions of dark and light furnishings to make you feel comfortable. It is that equal energy somewhere near the middle that provides you the best positive energy, personal balance, peace and

harmony. Yang is considered strong energy from the heavens or the universe and Yin is considered a softer energy from the earth. Yin/Yang balance is the underpinning for our planet. Earth and its gravitational pull have the perfect balance within the universe in order for it to remain in a gentle rotational cycle while revolving in its orbit.

You can use Yin and Yang to describe all direct opposites. Activities such as reading a book, sitting on the beach or listening to peaceful music are very passive and Yin. Activities such as swimming, playing tennis or bicycling are very active and are Yang. If you overdo on the first you can become very lethargic. If you overdo on the second you can become overly stimulated. Balance is found somewhere in the middle.

When it comes to home furnishings, those pieces that are soft, have curves, supple upholstery, warmer colors and flowing lines would be considered Yin. Those with hard edges, hard or tight upholstery, reflective surfaces, cooler colors or sharp angles would be Yang. For example, if you have a lot of light-colored tile on your floors, it is very Yang and needs to be balanced with Yin furniture or decorative accessories in warmer colors and softer fabrics. If the walls in your rooms are all quite dark, they are very Yin and need to be balanced with lighter-colored furnishing.

Too much Yang in a room may be exciting at first, but eventually can create aggressive, angry thinking and feelings. Too much Yin in a room might at first seem peaceful but eventually could lead to passive, even depressing feelings and thinking.

You can even apply this thought process to clothing. If you have a Yang personality (high-energy Type A) and you want to become more Yin, you do that by softening your clothing, wearing garments that are soft to the touch, are deeper in value, are warmer colors and drape or flow in the wind. If your personality is more Yin and you wish to strengthen your demeanor and become more Yang, wear clothing that's sharp, crisp, light-colored and is fitted or more structured in nature.

By using the principles of Yin and Yang you can go a long way toward creating harmony in your home and in your personal life. And no one will ever know you are using some Feng Shui techniques to do it.

Yin can be described as:

Cooler, slower, darker, gentler, paler, softer and more passive

Thin wavy lines, horizontal rectangles and broad oval shapes

Matte or textured surfaces, natural wood and fabrics

Black, gold and purple

Female

Yang can be described as:

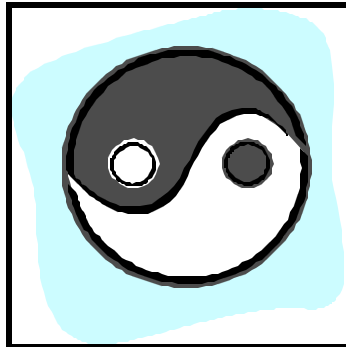
Hotter, faster, stronger, brighter, lighter, more active and aggressive

Circular, octagonal, square and angular in shape

Hard, shiny, reflective surfaces, glass, polished marble and stainless steel

White, blue, silver

Male



This is the universally recognized symbol for Yin and Yang. Notice that there always is a balance of some dark in the light and some light in the dark.

Using a balance of Yin/Yang that meets your energy needs is one of the simplest ways of using Feng Shui in your home and creating harmony. By evaluating each room in your home based upon a few of the characteristics mentioned above, you can create a wonderful, harmonious sense of well-being.

If you dislike going into one room because you are never comfortable there, look closely at it and determine if it is too light or too dark. If too dark, lighten it up with torchiere lamps, bright throw pillows or light-colored artwork and pull open the curtains. If too light, tone it down with darker throw rugs or lap robes and dim the lights. Balance is achieved by placing some dark in the light or some light in the dark.

Option 3: Create Balance with the Five Elements

Another of the foundations of Feng Shui energy used by all philosophies and schools is the use of the five elements—water, wood, fire, earth and metal. You can dramatically improve balance in your environment and your personal well-being by simply harnessing and using these specific natural energies provided by Mother Nature.

The proper use of the elements is another very easy way to create better energy in your home or office. The only rule you have to follow with regard to this option is:

Use a balanced (not necessarily equal) amount of each element in every room.

Considering there are only five elements to deal with, this should be a relatively easy process. This rule, however, is a touch arbitrary because “a balanced amount” depends on your personality as well as where you live. Also, I will caution you, overdoing one or two of the elements in any given room can throw off the balance in that room and you will feel uncomfortable every time you enter it.

While using the five basic elements to create better energy in your world use the following guidelines to maintain balance:

Water

The water element is represented by deep blues and purples or wavy lines in these colors. This element is best used in small quantities such as tabletop water fountains, pictures with lakes, oceans and rivers or the actual colors. The water element is very cooling, so it is great in a warm, south-facing room but can be very cold and unwelcoming in cooler north-facing rooms, especially if you paint the walls blue. Too much of this element can be very depressing. If you need more of the water element in a room you can also add a little of the metal element. If your room has too much of the water element, you can create balance by using items from the fire and wood elements.

Wood

The wood element is represented by plants, trees, wooden items, the color green and a tall thin rectangular shape. This is a very health- and wealth-oriented element with a healing color and can be used more than most of the other elements. You can add the wood element easily to all rooms through wooden pieces of furniture, wood flooring, pictures of trees, plants (live or silk) of various sizes along with the color green. If you still need more of the wood element you can also add some of the water element. If there is too much wood in your office or home balance it by using items from the metal and fire elements.

Fire

The fire element is best represented by the color red and items that reach upward and end with points on the top such as mountains, pyramids, even candles. This element should be used sparingly as it can energize a room enough to create

“heated arguments” and a hyper-nervous atmosphere. Use splashes of the fire element in shades of red or upward pointed shapes to warm up a cool north-facing room or to energize a very cozy earth-toned room. It is best to use the fire element in accent pieces such as pillows and artwork rather than a large piece of furniture. Think about how you feel when you wear a red dress or a red necktie. Either will give you a personal energy boost. As a general rule, do not use red in the dining or breakfast room as it stimulates the appetite and also is not conducive to quiet conversation. If a room has too much of the fire element, add some of the wood and water elements to tone it down and create balance.

Earth

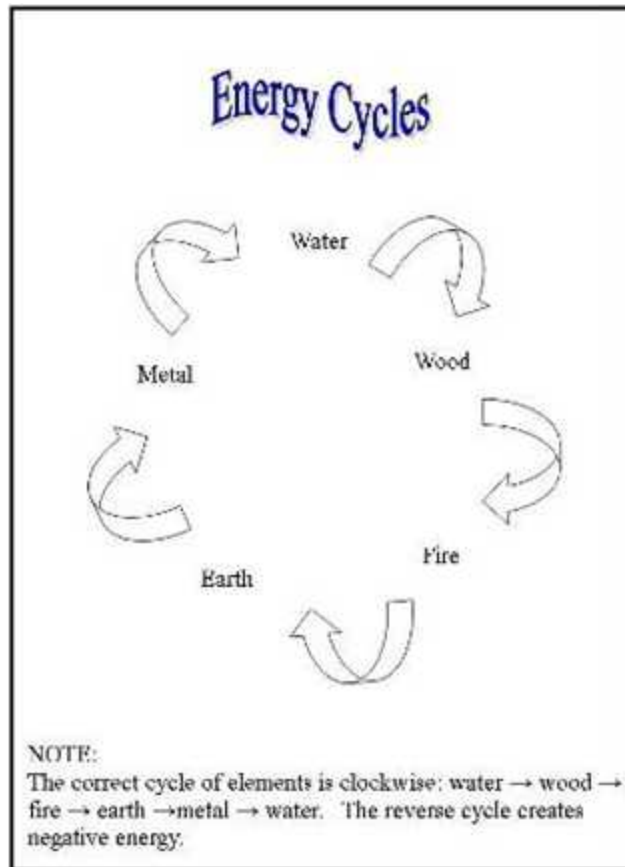
The earth element is generally represented by soft flowing items like upholstered furniture, throws, flowing curtains, low rectangular shapes, all the earth tone colors, especially terra cotta, ceramics, glass and those objects made out of the earth. This is a very peaceful, relaxing element and should take up a large percentage of the space in your home in rooms where you wish to relax, sleep or be together with the family doing quiet things together. If you have a room that still needs more earth energy you can also add some of the fire element. However, if there is too much earth in any given room you can become very lethargic and unmotivated. Add some of the wood and metal elements for balance.

Metal

The metal element is represented by the various metals such as gold, silver, copper, brass, pewter and so on. Those same colors, plus white and the round shape of a circle, also represent metal. This is a highly energizing element, great for offices or rooms in a home such as the kitchen where activity needs to take place. In other areas, go lightly. To further energize the colors or shapes of the metal element you can do so by adding more of the earth element. If your rooms have

walls that are white, your furniture is white and your flooring is a light color, you will find it uncomfortable to sit and relax in such space. Add some or lots of the fire and wood elements to bring it back into balance.

Creating balance through the use of the elements is lots of fun and very easy. As I mentioned earlier, it depends on your personality and what country you live in as to how much of each element will create balance in your environment. In the United States, the average home contains somewhere around sixty-five percent of a combination of the wood and earth elements. It contains thirty percent of a combination of the metal and water elements and five percent of the fire element. Use these simple rules of balance in every room, including your office. It works every time and, as with the Yin and Yang option, no one will even know you used Feng Shui to do it.



Will Feng Shui Work for You?

Absolutely yes! I have provided you with some basic rules to follow when applying the principles of Feng Shui to your home and personal life. By using the tools in this section and the principles that follow, there will always be things people can do that will make a positive energy difference in their lives. The specific things will vary depending upon each person's energy needs, goals and objectives.

I have now given you three fundamental Feng Shui options. Whether you use one or all three, the improvements in your personal environment will lead you to balance and harmony, resulting in a better life. When your world is balanced, your health, wealth and prosperity all improve, leading to a better, more fulfilling, abundant life.