

Feng Shui for the Work Place.....

& Every Place

By Tamara Mitchell



If you follow all of the ergonomics precautions, breaks, keyboard shortcuts, and have everything set up at the correct distance and height, you may still have unresolved issues with your office setup. Is your office environment feeding your body and soul with energy to keep you well, healthy, and happy? Turning to Feng Shui, the practice of placement can help create an office and work space that provides the flow of energy (chi) necessary to foster productivity, health, and creativity.

Just as ergonomics tends to boil down to a rather complex set of rules to follow, Feng Shui also has complex rules. Feng Shui literally means Wind and Water. It was developed over hundreds of years and it continues to evolve, but it is a spiritual practice aiming to live in harmony with the natural world.^{1,2} Most basic to it's premise is to live in a balance of energy, making sure that there is a way for positive energy to flow throughout the surroundings (and through you) without any areas that trap energy or allow stagnant energy to settle. There are also sources of negative energy which can flow into a space, lines that cut the energy in space, and there are positions which allow positive energy to flow too quickly out of a space. It's fairly easy to think of positive energy as a refreshing breeze flowing through a room. You don't want gale-force wind rushing through and you don't want the air to sit still. Negative energy can be thought of as stagnant air, sources of potentially bad smells or fumes that get carried into a space or that settle in corners with no air circulation.

Rules tend to become obsolete as technology changes and lifestyles change. So, it's more important to realize both with ergonomics and with Feng Shui, the underlying basis of the rules. Understand the "why" of the rules than to simply follow rules by rote. That way, you can learn to feel when things are not right and change them. You can invent your own ways of dealing with energy problems which is the most powerful way to solve them and allows you to use your own style to make your environment more comfortable for you.² Until you learn a few of the rules and try changing some things, however, you will likely be doubtful about the power of this and you will probably not know enough to recognize what needs changing or how to change it. With practice, you will learn to recognize when things are not right and you'll become better at recognizing what is wrong.

We have searched and we have found no scientific studies to substantiate or refute the claims of feng shui. If you are a doubtful person, you will likely think this whole exercise is nothing more than superstition. Feng shui may appear to be merely myth or

superstition to some people, but it is helpful to realize that there is power in the invisible world and that the ancient practitioners were using principles of balance and harmony. If you want to give feng shui a try, there are countless cases throughout the hundreds of years where it has changed people's lives almost overnight for no explainable reason. What we present here is only a tiny fraction of the entire study of feng shui which can take a lifetime to truly master, but it is enough to perhaps make a difference in changing the energy dynamics in your life. If nothing else, it may be a form of self-fulfilling prophecy, but it seems more like it is a recipe for making your environment more enjoyable, less stressful, more welcoming, healthier, and more logical. Some of the cures presented in many of the sources may seem far fetched and there doesn't seem to be an explanation as to why they are recommended. We are presenting only the most obvious and logical solutions. If you want to read and learn more, we suggest that you go to the reference section and start reading! People who have truly mastered feng shui study for years.

Yin and Yang in life and health

Yin and Yang are two types of energy that work together. When they are separate, they merge, yet when they are together, they are separate.³ Yin and yang energies interact and are in constant motion. As the time of day changes from light to dark, the seasons change from hot to cold, events happen in everyday life, the balance of energy is constantly in flux. The table below defines the energy associated with yin and yang.^{2, 3, 4} In terms of health and medicine, yin and yang refer to the energies and functioning modes of various organs of the body. When there is the right balance between yin and yang, the body is in a state of perfect health. This is nurtured by eating the right food, caring for the body, and cultivating a mental equilibrium that promotes longevity.³ Yin and yang are also used to describe things, attitudes, or other natural phenomena, but in all cases a state of equilibrium is desired and is symbolized by the yin and yang symbol of melded, but separate energies....a bit of light in the dark and a bit of dark in the light.

Yang and Yin Representation

Yang	Yin
Masculine	Feminine
Day	Night
Summer	Winter
High	Low
Right	Left
Strong	Weak
Light	Dark
Dry	Wet
Hot	Cold
Sun	Moon
Active	Stillness/Inertia/Quiet/Sleep
Living	Dead
Physical	Mental
Self	Selflessness
Material	Spiritual
Logic	Intuition

Colors are discussed a bit later, but briefly, predominant Yin colors include Green and Blue. These colors can be added to a room that has too much Yang energy to calm it down.⁴ Predominant Yang colors include Yellow and Red. These colors can be added to a room that has too much Yin energy to liven it up.⁴

Other Yang colors are tan, beige, brown, mauve, maroon, lavender, and gold. Other Yin colors include pink

More white added to any color, means it reflects more light and contributes more yang energy. Darker shades of a color reflect less light and are more yin.⁵ This might not seem intuitive since pale pastels are not generally thought of as being strong or masculine in Western cultures. It is the amount of black added to a color that darkens it and reduces the amount of light energy reflected that makes it more yin. Brighter, lighter colors reflect a lot of the light's energy making it more yang.

Clearing Clutter

One of the most important aspects of feng shui is to begin by clearing clutter.^{2, 6} Very simply, clutter blocks energy flow. It is pointless to rearrange things or add feng shui cures to an environment strewn with stacks of papers, bills, unopened mail, unfinished projects, broken parts, discarded or outdated items, dirty laundry, or trash. It is also important to go through your environment and get rid of things that remind you of people or occasions you have unfavorable thoughts or memories about. Get rid of things you meant to do, but don't ever seem to have the time to do or bite the bullet and hire someone to do the job efficiently and completely. These things suck energy from you and from your environment. They are stumbling blocks to moving energy in the present and into a better future. They are dragging you down without you even being aware of it. Every time you look at an item that reminds you of someone you have bad memories of, it charges you with just a bit of negative energy. That stack of papers you are avoiding sits there in the corner subconsciously nagging you. Whether you feel you need to sort through this stuff or if you can just chuck it all is up to you, but you must get it out of your life before you can start organizing and arranging your environment.^{6, FastFengShui2} Once one stack is gone and you can see the surface underneath again, you will feel the amazing energy it imparts. Then, whenever you have something you would put down in that spot, make a decision to throw it away, make a permanent storage place for things in that category, or take care of the issue immediately and be done with it. If clutter is a serious problem for you, please read Reference 6. It categorizes types of clutter and reasons for clutter along with offering ways to deal with your clutter and your habits.



Image courtesy of robertstinnett, Flickr.com

Does your office look somewhat like this?

Once you have cleared out the obvious surface clutter, you will be ready to start arranging the furniture to allow better flow of chi. When looking at arrangement, it often becomes clear that some of the furniture itself is clutter and makes the room feel cramped and uncomfortable.⁸ Start by eliminating furniture that blocks the traffic flow, furniture that is no longer needed or used, furniture you never really liked or that doesn't fit the style of the room, or furniture that is broken and cannot be repaired. It's important to accommodate the functions of the room and comfortably seat the occupants, but it's just as important to leave space to move around and allow "breathing room" for the occupants.

For those who take work out of the office or who travel, the concept of clutter applies not only to your office, but also to your brief case.⁹ Make sure you are well equipped and organized for meetings, carry spare cell phone batteries and other back-up materials, keep your brief case cleared out of old materials and keep it in organized. A brief case filled with unnecessary papers and items carries unhealthy energy. Carrying a picture of loved ones or an inspiring message in your brief case can fill you with positive feelings and reassurance.⁹

Travelling tips: When flying, arrive early and maintain a calm state of mind.⁹ Be patient and use the time waiting in lines or waiting for your flight to do some calm breathing, review your schedule, and appreciate this as time to take a break and relax. Be aware of tension in your body and relax those areas. Keep weight evenly distributed when you are carrying luggage or use rolling bags. Be aware of your posture and avoiding lopsided or awkward postures while walking or standing, which add tension to your body.⁹

In general, this is all a matter of doing what you know you should be doing, but for some reason you aren't. For some people, making these changes can take a year or more. For others, once they get started they find it impossible to stop as each bit of clutter that is cleared, each step leads toward a more balanced life and an environment that feels so great that they feel compelled to continue. Some of us have more to clean up, which can take a while, so be patient with yourself.

Introduction to Feng Shui

After the space is clutter-free, the rest of the principles of feng shui can be applied. You will begin to feel the effects of energy manipulation. This ancient practice has been used since it was outlined in the I Ching (Book of Changes) approximately 5,000 years ago.² There are two different schools of feng shui. The oldest, the *Form School*, dates back to the Chin Dynasty, AD300. This type of feng shui is also called Intuitive feng shui and it uses analysis, common sense, and perception to create comfortable and fortuitous placements.^{2,10} It uses intuition along with a holistic approach to life such as eating healthy food, meditating, practicing yoga or tai chi, organic gardening, respecting the environment and nature.² Just as with clearing clutter in your external environment, intuition can only be felt when you have cleared your life of things such as past unfinished business, internal chatter, overindulgence, fatigue, arrogance, eating on the run, and too much focus on the material world.² Taking care of your mental and physical health makes sense from the standpoint of overall health and doing so allows energy to flow through you.

A slightly younger type of feng shui, the *Compass School* dates from the Sung dynasty, AD 960-1279. The Compass School makes use of a complex compass called a *lo p'an* and it uses direction, astronomy, astrology, and numerology to determine auspicious directions and locations. Each of the eight directions, South, North, West, and East, plus Southwest, Northwest, Southeast, and Northeast, as well as the center which signifies a place of perfect balance, is represented with a combination of lines and dashes and equates to a color, a body part, an illness, a number, a familial relation, an element, and more¹⁰.

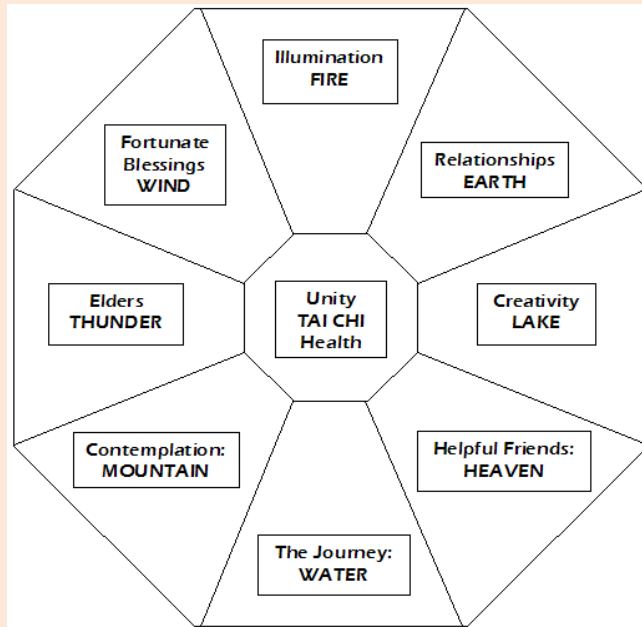
We feel that it is helpful to use some from both of these schools and most of the references also start with the bagua to get some idea of where things in your environment might need changing, along with intuition to look at specific areas in a person's life where energy changes can make a difference.

Bagua (or Pa Kua)

The Bagua is a chart that can be used to help understand the energy in various parts of an environment and the energy in your life.

Originally, the shape was derived from the pattern on a turtle's shell.²

The chart lays out 9 locations associated with various aspects of life. The energy in each of those locations or sectors is affected by many things. The 8 sectors around the chart, work in pairs in a correlated manner. When the energy all of the 8 forces are in balance, we are in a state of harmony, the essence of feng shui and the central image of Tai Chi, called Unity. This state of unity is the ultimate state of health and it is the state each person should strive to attain.



Feng Shui Bagua

To better understand each of these factors, we will detail some examples of these in your life.^{2,6}

- ☉ **Fire** has to do with illumination, *enlightenment, fame*. Are you fulfilled in life or do you feel there is something missing? Do you feel you have the answers within you or do you seek answers from others? This has to do with *growing closer to your inner brightness* and your essence.
- ☉ **Water** has to do with *life's path or one's career*. How do you feel about the work you are doing? Are you fulfilled by your work? Do you feel comfortable on the path you are following or do you feel like you are crashing into obstacles, swimming upstream, you are unhappy with the course of life's flow?
- ☉ **Earth** has to do with your *relationships, love, marriage*. Whether single or married, are you engaged in good social relationships, happy with your marital status and your relationship, desperately seeking a companion, unhappy and thinking about separation or divorce? Do you have good relationships with your co-workers, boss, friends, social circle, or do you have trouble with some of these people and feel tension or anger with regard to your personal and professional relationships?
- ☉ **Mountain** has to do with *contemplation and the spiritual world, knowledge, wisdom, self-improvement*. Inner stillness is called the mountain and signifies meditation, a sense of spiritual life that can be felt in silence of the mountains or a cave. Is spirituality a part of your life or are you skeptical or can't seem to find time to devote to meditation or prayer?
- ☉ **Lake** has to do with *creative energy, offspring, projects*. This has both to do with your relationship with children, whether they are your own or others, as well as your

creativity in your work and projects. All of these things come from our “internal spring” that is responsible for giving birth to new life and ideas. Do you feel blocked, have you failed on various projects, do you get along poorly with children or do you want children but haven’t had them?

- ☯ **Thunder** has to do with your *relationship with your elders, ancestors, superiors, community*. Do you have meaningful relationships with teachers, mentors, or elders? Do you treasure the memories of your parents, or do you have bad feelings toward grandparents, parents, teachers, etc. Do you feel you were not appreciated and loved by them?
- ☯ **Heaven** has to do with *helpful friends, compassion, travel*. Do you have a good group of friends you can rely on? Are you generous with your time, money, energy, and help with various volunteer activities? Are you surrounded by selfless people whom you can count on, who step in to help you without being asked, and visa versa?
- ☯ **Wind** has to do with *fortunate blessings, especially regarding money, prosperity, wealth, abundance*. Do you feel blessed in your life or are you constantly worried about money? Are you in debt or do you have a positive cash flow? Energy in this area brings *blessings from the material world in the form of money, good omens, luck, or fortunes*.
- ☯ **Tai Chi** has part of every one of the eight other energies in it and it relates to *health and unity*.

Balance between pairs of these energies is diagramed below. As mentioned, everything works in a balance of energy forces. Nothing ever works in isolation and in most cases, there are opposing forces that work together to create balance.

	balance	
Fire (Illumination)	Organic Opposites	Water (The Journey)
Lake (Creativity)	Natural or Elemental Opposites	Mountain (Contemplation)
Wind (Fortunate Blessings)	Impulsive Opposites	Thunder (Elders)
Heaven (Helpful Friends)	Universal Opposites	Earth (Relationships)
	Tai Chi (Health) ☯	

For instance, with illumination, you may achieve prominence in some field, but what really matters is that you are doing what really matters to you and that your life path leads you in this direction. Another example would be, a good relationship with our elders and superiors generally leads to fortunate blessings.

It is important to also realize that the inter-relationship between all of these energies is what leads to tai chi and health. Relationships and helpful friends often lead to fortunate blessings. Contemplation and meditation may lead to greater creativity, but it also will likely help you realize your potential (Illumination) and thus bring fortunate blessings.

Being a helpful friend often results in positive forces in your life's journey. Everything is interconnected.

Applying the bagua to buildings

The first step is to make a drawing of whatever area you plan to analyze. If you are analyzing a building, draw the top view of the building and note where each room is located. Since most homes, buildings, and other manmade structures are a variation on a square, the bagua has been adapted as shown below. When a building or office is rectangular rather than square, the bagua can be stretched to fit. When there are extensions or parts missing, there are ways to help fill in the energy or otherwise compensate for the irregular shape. It can be applied on any scale: from a small scale, for instance just your desk or one room, or on a larger scale such as a whole piece of property, a building, or even a town. It works the same on any scale, where the 9 different sectors represent the energy in each area of the space.

Prosperity Abundance Fortunate Blessings WIND (yang)	Fame Reputation Illumination FIRE	Relationships Love Marriage EARTH (strong yin)
Elders Family Community THUNDER	Health Unity TAI CHI	Creativity Offspring Projects LAKE
Knowledge Wisdom Self-Improvement Contemplation MOUNTAIN (yin)	Career Life Path The Journey WATER	Helpful Friends Compassion Travel HEAVEN (strong yang)

F R O N T D O O R
o n t h i s s i d e

Position the bagua map so that your main entrance or door is along the bottom of the chart. In most cases, the door will be in the Mountain, Water, or Heaven section unless the door is in a deep alcove. If there is more than one entrance, use the main entrance for this purpose, even if it's not the door you usually use. Each section of the bagua that corresponds to a physical section of the room or building will correspond to the energy in that part of your life.

The type of orientation used here is called Black Hat Feng Shui and it has been used for over 4,000 years, though it is most widely used in the West today.¹¹ In traditional Chinese feng shui the compass is used to place the bagua. The feng shui compass is upside down from our regular compasses, so if you follow this school of thought, the North side of the building, room, etc. should be at the bottom of the bagua map. Clearly, this has a huge impact on the meaning of the different areas of the building unless the

main door happens to be on the North side. Traditional Chinese feng shui takes a very dim view of the Black Hat method, but to really apply the traditional Chinese method takes a huge amount of time and accounts for many other factors including specific details about each occupant of the house or building. The original thought was that the electromagnetic fields of the earth affect the energy in a space.¹² In current times, the presence of large amounts of computer and electronic equipment creates so much stronger electromagnetic fields, many feel that the effect of the earth's magnetic fields are probably completely washed out.¹² For beginners, the doorway method is probably the easiest since the relationship is always consistent and it doesn't require a compass.¹² Perhaps the best test is to make some changes and see what is affected in your life.

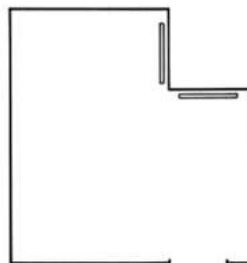
Take just one area of the bagua that corresponds to an area of your life that is going especially well. Pile a bunch of junk in that area and wait a week or so. In most cases, people find that area of their life takes a sudden turn for the worse.⁶ It can take a complete moon cycle for things to change after changes are made to the environment, but it generally doesn't take that long

If part of the building or room is missing, the associated energies in the bagua will be lowered. Exterior or interior lighting can be used to extend or fill in that space. A spotlight in the garden illuminating the space can fill in a missing corner of a house to energize that part of the bagua. If it's not possible to illuminate a negative space, the area inside can be energized with anything sparkly like a tapestry with foil threads, small shiny baubles, or even a photograph of sparkling water.² An illusion of extended space can be achieved by placing mirrors on the walls that create the missing space.²



Exterior Illumination of Missing Corner

Illustration from Reference 2.



Interior use of mirrors on missing corner

Illustration from Reference 2.

If there is a projection of the building off the main structure that protrudes beyond the edges of the bagua map, it is called an extension. The energy in that section of the bagua will be exaggerated. The only section of the bagua where it is especially not desirable to have a projection is the Mountain area. Other areas will simply create a dominance of the energy associated with that area of the bagua map.²

Caution is advised when considering a house, office, or other building that is an extremely unusual shape. Although negative space or projections can be reduced, they cannot be completely compensated.² When the primary yang, or male, house of Heaven is missing or when the primary yin, or female, house of Earth is missing, it will be difficult for the associated gender to feel comfortable and settled there for a long time.² Where either Heaven or Earth or their complementary pairs, Wind and Mountain are projections, there will be exaggerated energies of yang or yin, respectively.²

Intuitive aspects.

Changing our environment changes our perception of it, whether that is consciously or subconsciously.² Five things that alter the energy and add “flavor” to inanimate spaces and objects:¹³

- Light
- Sound
- Living energy (people, animals, or plants)
- Water
- Color
- Movement
- Weight

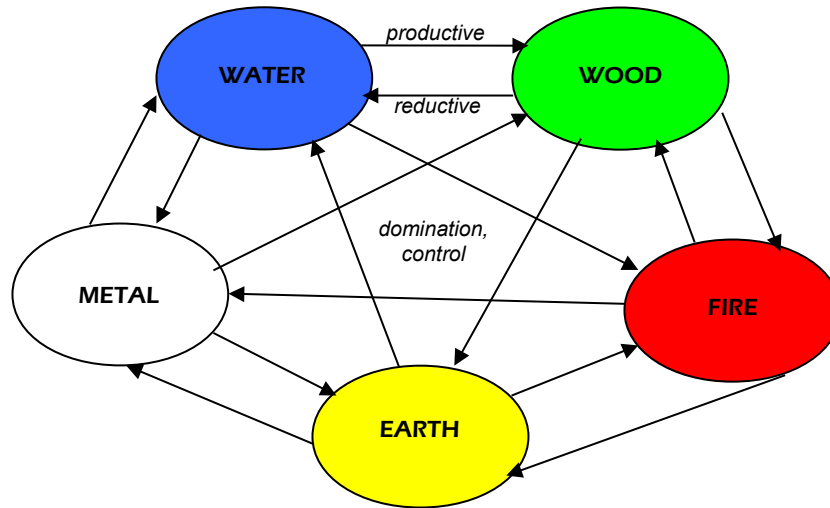
Sight is the most important sense in creating an appealing environment, however all the senses are important. Sounds such as a splashing fountain, smells such as lilacs blooming in the garden, are all contributors to a positive feeling.² First impressions account for more than 50% of the entire experience of a place and a beautiful fresh arrangement of flowers in the entrance may go unnoticed if the rug is stained and shabby or the place smells bad.² It’s an interesting exercise to walk through your own environment and pretend that it is the first visit. And it’s also interesting to get friends to write down their impressions of your place: what do they notice first when they walk in, what do they notice right away that needs fixing, what did they hear and smell, and what general feeling did they get about the place?

You should remain true to your own style. If you love Southwest décor, it is important that you not feel that just because you are applying feng shui, you must switch to Asian décor. Every guideline can be applied to any style and the energy of your environment will be a lot more powerful if you interpret the rules using your own creative expression.²

Color and the Five Elements

Color is a reflection of certain wavelengths. It affects people physiologically, but it also has cultural and learned associations that affect people’s reactions to color. If you have a

favorite color or dislike some colors, they may remind you of a positive or negative experience or connotation.² In feng shui, there are 5 elements: water, wood, fire, earth, and metal.^{2, 10} Each has its own energy that harmonizes or opposes other elements. Originally, these elements were each associated with a part of China, its climate and soil color. By the Han dynasty in 207 BC – 220 AD, planets, tastes, seasons, sounds, internal organs, shapes, birth order, birthdates, numbers, and other things were added to each of the elements until each became a category which represents the movements of chi.¹⁰



The Five Elements

Information for chart above and chart below derived from References 2, 10, 14

The arrows in the diagram of the 3 types of elemental cycles indicate the direction of energy flow and a parent/child relationship between the elements. In the clockwise direction, it is called the productive cycle where each element gives birth to the next element. Fire produces earth, earth contracts to metal, metal contracts to liquid or water, water nourishes the growth of wood, and wood gives fuel for fire.¹⁰

Conversely, a reductive or healing cycle runs counterclockwise with each element reducing the strength of the element that precedes it. Fire burns wood, wood absorbs water, water corrodes metal, metal moves earth, and earth reduces fire.¹⁰ In the domination or control cycle each element reduces the energy or chi of the element sitting two places away from it. Fire melts metal, earth dams water, metal pierces wood, water douses fire, and wood scars or depletes earth.^{2,10} If seen as a negative force, this is described to be a destructive or chaotic force such as the imbalances that are happening on earth to create global warming and infectious diseases.¹⁰ If seen as a positive force, this is described as a system of checks and balances in the event that chi needs more control.²

If you want more of a particular type of energy in a room, you can add something that represents the corresponding element. For instance, to have more healing energy or growth (as for a business), you could add something that represents the wood element. This could be more actual wood in the form of wooden furniture or trim, or it could be achieved through the use of adding the color green.

The use of colors associated with each element, described more fully in the chart in Attachment 1, work best when adjacent colors are used. When colors that are two places away on the elemental cycle are combined, they do not have a very pleasing or powerful effect on the environment. The quantity of a color makes a very big difference.² A splash of red in a yellow room makes a bold statement. Too much red would be overpowering and it would take a lot of blue in a yellow room to make any difference to the energy level at all.² In any case, choice of color is personal and you should choose colors that make you feel the desired way in any room!²

Other colors not associated with the Five Elements also have special energies associated with them. Purple is a very powerful color and represents physical and mental healing, and spiritual awareness. Orange strengthens concentration, gives one a sense of purpose, will stimulate creativity, and is the color of organization.

The inherent energy of food can be used to help balance a person's energy. All foods have both yin and yang qualities, but there are dominant factors in each food. Generally foods that are harvested in the fall and winter have more yang energy as they are drier, keep for a long time, and can supply a lot of energy throughout the cold months.² They will help warm you in cold climates and during the winter months. Foods harvested in the summer are watery and sweet, they do not keep well, and they generally are less dense in calories, so are more yin.² They will keep you cool in warmer climates and in hotter summer months. If you eat foods that grow in your area and climate and eat with the seasons, your health is likely to benefit. Eating imported foods that are not in season in your area does not provide your body with the energy and nutrients it really needs. In addition, seasonings of foods have impart yang or yin energy as indicated in the chart below.²

Yang Foods	Yin Foods
Foods containing a lot of water	Drier foods
Summer fruits and leaves e.g. melons, tomatoes, lettuce, corn	Stems, roots, and seeds e.g. carrots, turnips, parsnips, potatoes, onions
Growth above ground	Growth below ground
Hot, aromatic foods	Salty, sour foods

Create an office that keeps you healthy and helps you work effectively

Much of the literature on feng shui and offices emphasizes placement that encourages profitability. In this article, while we agree that healthy finances in business are important and take an emotional burden off the individual, we are primarily concerned with physical and mental wellbeing. The positive effects of chi (energy) have long been practiced in the form of acupuncture, tai chi, yoga, etc. Feng shui is just one more way to promote health and well-being through the facilitation of energy movement in the environment and surroundings.

Home offices have unique challenges as they often need to fit into rooms that are used for other purposes. The most important rule is to never put a home office in the bedroom.¹⁰ The activities involved in the office and the bedroom have opposite energies. The office

is high energy while the bedroom needs to be calming and sleep-inducing.¹⁰ If a separate room is not possible, home offices do best when located in a common area with clearly delineated boundaries such as a screen, curtain, or accordion door.¹⁰ The best location of the home office would be in the Wind/Prosperity area of the bagua. Even a small corner can be used to create a nice small office space, but make sure you use a comfortable, adjustable chair and work surface that is correct for your task (unlike this illustration).



Illustration from Reference 15

The following suggestions will help you feel more creative and able to focus on your work, improve your energy level and feelings of happiness at work, and remove awkward tensions and sources of negative energy that can have detrimental effects on your work, health, and life.^{1, 2, 9, 10, 16}

- Remove clutter and make sure things are organized so that you feel free to create, have a clear flow of energy in the room, and can feel uplifted by your office or lab space. Keep things clean and in good repair.
- Position your desk so that you have a direct view of the door, a pleasant view out a window, and a wall behind you. Most sources indicate that this is a position of power, but it can also be that by being able to see the door, you are not subconsciously concerned about someone coming in the door and not being aware that they are there. A wall behind you will avoid sources of glare on your computer screen and the light source casting of a shadow on your work. Do not sit with a window directly behind you as it compromises security and can have associated drafts. Generally, it's a good idea to sit so that you can see the entire room. It will make you feel more in control of your surroundings. A picture of mountains behind you will endow your presence with a sense of power. Pictures of water scenes set a soothing, reflective mood and should be in front of you, not behind you.



Illustration from Reference 17

- Rounded corners on a desk improves the flow of creativity, especially a kidney shaped desk. Corners in general are sources of negative energy called “shars” or cutting edges, which should never be placed where they are aiming toward another person. Corners can be softened by placing plants at the corner of walls, desks, etc.



Photo from Reference 15

- Plants, flowers and wind chimes help you stay connected to the natural world and provide yang energy. Live plants are very effective in filtering toxins out of the air and the color green spurs creativity and new ideas. Plants are good to place in otherwise unused corners of the office to stimulate energy in those dead spaces. A plant in the prosperity corner of the room symbolizes growth. Make sure all plants are kept healthy and thriving or they will bring very negative chi to the room.
- Natural daylight is always the best, so move your desk near a window if possible, but never close enough to cause glare. Never place your desk so that you are facing a window or a fluorescent light which will cause eyestrain and exhaustion. Replace fluorescent lighting with lights that have a warmer spectrum. Light *is* energy in feng shui, so the placement and type of lighting changes the ambiance of a room, but it also energizes the aspects of a building or room associated with that location in the bagua.² Glare, shadows, and overly bright light can create an unstable environment.² Indirect or up-lighting increases the ambient light without the undesirable effects of harsh bright spots or deep shadows. Full-spectrum lighting is known to have positive physical and mental effects of healing and counteracting effects of SAD (seasonal affective disorder). Task lighting should be about 2 ft. away from you on your non-dominant side to avoid creating a shadow across your work when you need to write.¹⁰

- Ventilation is very important. On days when the weather is fair, companies should turn off the central heating and air conditioning and encourage employees to open windows for fresh air and clearing the room. At home this is very easy and opening windows during the day is associated with a positive flow of energy in the space.
- Sounds can have a positive or negative effect on the work space and it's a very individual matter. An office near an elevator that makes a tone every time it opens or closes can be very distracting, as can voices from a nearby break room or busy hallway.² Some people may learn to ignore these distracting sounds, but they still are present and in a subconscious way, they will affect the energy level of the area. Sound machines or music can help mask these irritants to some extent and use of soft tapestries, wall hangings, or sound-absorbing partitions and plants can help absorb sound.^{2,10} Wear earplugs if nothing else works.¹⁰ On the other hand, an office with an open window where birds can be heard singing or a fountain is splashing in a courtyard will help fill the space with positive energy.
- Choose colors that accent the mood you want in the room. The colors you choose for your office will have an impact on your feeling of balance, motivation to work, creativity, organization, and ability to concentrate. Consult with the previous table of the Five Elements and other colors to make sure that you have a balance of Yin and Yang energy and make sure that you use colors that you really like!¹ Colors reflect wavelengths and these wavelengths are associated with various types of energy.⁹
 - Green – confidence, inspires growth in business, calming and relaxing
 - Gray – leadership
 - Blue – creativity
 - Yellow and brown – nurturing. Brown represents stability in life, being grounded. Yellow represents the sun and it's warmth promoting feelings of optimism and cheerfulness.
 - White – aliveness, encourages prosperity and abundance, calming effect, increases determination, mental clarity, and sharp focus
 - Red – passionate, fame, good fortune, happiness, dispels bad luck and attracts positive energy
 - Creamy colors – calm
 - Purple – attention
 - Black (accents) – increases mental activity and improves communication, focuses the mind, and helps with decision making.

If you use the bagua to map out your office, it is helpful to place the following items within the corresponding area, using the main door to your office to position the bagua map. This works with home offices as well as at work.

- Reference books in the Mountain/"knowledge" or "wisdom" area.¹
- A crystal bowl in the Wind/prosperity area.¹
- Reception and phone or communication systems in the Heaven/helpful friends area.¹
- A picture of your parents or your family in the Thunder/family area.¹

Make sure you do not have an overabundance of highly creative or relaxing objects in your office. Remove some of them and add more structured elements to induce a work-

oriented emotions.¹ Wood represents growth, development, and planning so can be a good element to have in the office, such as a wood desk.¹

It is not possible to cover the entire field of feng shui in such a short article, we hope this will give you some tools to start improving your work and living space and to start reaping the benefits of improved energy flow in your life.

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This article and all of our articles are intended for your information and education. We are not experts in the diagnosis and treatment of specific medical or mental problems. When dealing with a severe problem, please consult your healthcare or mental health professional and research the alternatives available for your particular diagnosis prior to embarking on a treatment plan. You are ultimately responsible for your health and treatment!

Attachment 1

Five Elements and Colors

ELEMENT	COLOR	ENERGY	ENERGY DESCRIPTION	COLOR EFFECTS
WATER	blue, black	floating	Stillness of late night or very early morning, Winter	Blue provides tranquility, peace, and a feeling of trust but may cause drowsiness and is the extreme opposite of profit and materialism. Sea and sky blue • adventure Navy blue • intellect, wisdom Blue does not promote healing. Black is the absence of color and if used excessively can be depressing, will diminish physical energy, and can cause a lack of clarity. Black symbolizes money and income and it is the color of emotional protection. It's best used to define borders or as an accent color. As an accent, it can lead occupants to greater precision.
WOOD	Green	Upward and outward	Solid energy of a growing tree, early morning	Green stimulates bone growth and good posture, has a strong healing effect on the liver, gall bladder, digestion. Green stimulates possibility and has encouraging energy on the nervous system (<i>becoming active</i>). Too much green, other than plants, can create naïve idealism and move people away from grounded realism.
FIRE	Red	pulsating, active	Midday, overhead sun, summer	Stimulates activity. In excessive quantity, may lead to violence, excitability, greater levels of stress, migraines, impatience, and general anxiety. Proper amounts can induce passion and sensuality. Strongly accelerates the

				<p>digestive system. Open wounds or sores take longer to heal when exposed to red light. Fermentation is accelerated by red, so is helpful in making bread, pickles, etc. Too much red in children's rooms may overstimulate them.</p>
EARTH	Yellow	inward, condensing	Gathering force of the soil, late summer, harvest season	<p>Gathering energies promoting socialization. Inspiring, warmth, cheerfulness, friendliness. Motivates people to consider their relationship with the masses, drawing introverts out.</p>
METAL	White	solidification	End of the day and the year, autumn	<p>Harmony of all colors and wavelengths. Purity, poise, confidence. When combined with silver or gold, creates a calm atmosphere.</p>