

ELEMENTAL DESIGN

Create a harmonious patio through Five Elements Theory

THERE ARE PLENTY OF WAYS TO approach patio and deck design, but one often-overlooked method involves Chinese medicine's Five Elements Theory.

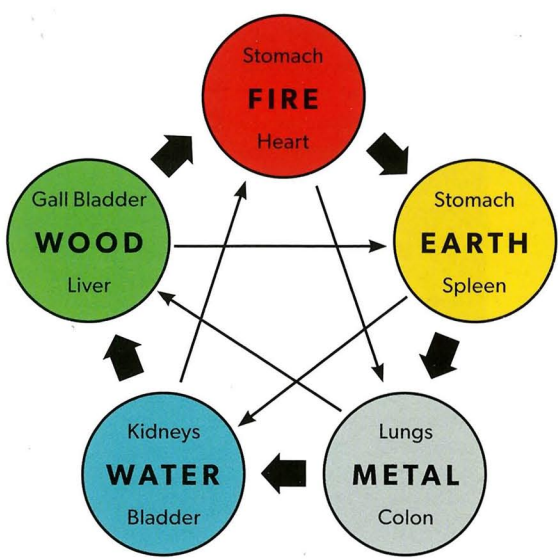
While feng shui, a complex methodology of balancing energy, is occasionally considered for home interiors, not everyone applies it to outdoor living.

According to Five Elements Theory, wood, fire, earth, metal and water make up the basic elements of the material world. Each element

corresponds to specific aspects of the body, and nature.

Ancient healers linked human health to the Five Elements Theory by connecting each element with an organ or tissue. For example, wood is connected to the liver, gall bladder, eyes and tendons (and, in nature, spring and wind). Wood fuels fire, so if the wood element doesn't have enough energy, fire elements (heart, small intestine, tongue) can suffer.

YIN — the most expanded stage



YANG — the most contracted stage

WOOD

Wooden decks naturally bring in the element of wood, as do trees, shrubs and even flowers. A creative way to add wood comes in the form of reclaimed barn wood, which can work as a barrier to wind (which, in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TMC) wood is connected to) or a backdrop to a patio space. In TMC, wood carries characteristics of flexibility, gentleness, expansion, resilience and growth.



FIRE

Fire adds heat — a sense of excitement. Fire pits and masonry fireplaces warm spring, summer and fall evenings in the mountains. In TMC, fire ignites high spiritedness, openness and creativity. And in this patio, built by Beck Building Company, the fire element mimics the aspens during the blazing fall foliage show.



EARTH

Earth can be represented in so many ways, from stone patio flooring to flowers, shrubs and trees. Earth represents maturation, development and stabilization, or a sense of grounding. It also supports transformation and mental clarity.



METAL

Metal sculptures can add a contemporary or rustic look to your patio design, depending upon the piece. Artwork like SteelLog Artistic Metals includes fire, as well. Metal can also be incorporated through furniture. In TCM, metal represents attributes of letting go, cutting and simplicity.



WATER

Water brings a sense of soothing and flow, and spas are the perfect way to draw that relaxation into your body. In TMC, water contains attributes of knowledge, wisdom, inwardness and building up reserves. - BY KIMBERLY NICOLETTI



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