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## Feng Shui tips for the winter months

By Michele Duffy



Decorative mirrors symbolize the water element. Photos provided

The nights are long and dark now, with winter's chilly breath whispering frosty remembrances marking the season of stillness. No wonder winter is connected to the water element! The qualities of the winter season and water element are powerfully intertwined, including frozen water turning up as sparkly seasonal snow and ice, or knowing that if you gaze at the surface of a body of water it may appear like not much is going on, but as in winter, life's dormancy often reveals much activity happening beneath the surface.

Once the dreamy and thoughtful pause of a winter freeze thaws, water also nourishes new life, fresh starts, new ideas and beginnings often connected with springtime. Both water and winter play very important roles in the cycles of the ages, in our lives, and on our planet.

Feng shui integrates all of the Five Elements skillfully into our spaces and reintroduces us to living more aligned with nature and paying attention to the natural cycles and seasons. Feng shui introduces you to its benefits by analyzing every level of your space including healthy chi flow, floor plan and yard analysis, furniture placement, symbolism, artwork, texture, color, and so on. What you surround yourself with, you become.

The Five Elements include water, wood, fire, earth and metal. In each life area of the Bagua (see diagram, next page) all five elements ideally should be present

and the carefully trained eye of a professional can help ensure that the right proportion of each element is maintained for balanced activation. Sound feng shui connects us to the essence of this natural source of positive chi flow. Each of the five elements rules each of the nine Bagua areas, such as Health and Wellness, which is ruled by earth, or Children and Completion, ruled by metal.

In Feng Shui we utilize in every space the "creative or productive cycle" (water creates wood, wood creates fire, fire creates earth, earth creates metal and metal creates water) and also the "controlling" or "overcoming" cycle, when one element is too dominating in your environment.

The water element symbolizes flowing, unstructured, seeking chi, intuitiveness, rejuvenation, ease, purity, refreshment, spirituality, adventure, nourishment, money, mystery and courage. Water has different types of energy too and can be both yin and yang. Water can be gentle, calm or still (yin) like small rivers, streams and ponds or fluid and moving (yang) like oceans, waterfalls and large lakes. Having too little water represented in your space will create stress, anxiety, money issues, lethargy, stuck life force and money chi, while having too much water can create a chaotic, unproductive, unpredictable and spacey environment for residents.

Placing a water element or water symbolism near your front entrance and in the career area is important to activate healthy chi for your entire home and also for your career. Water flows and so keeping it actually flowing in the front of your home will ensure a steady flow of life force energy to your home. If your career is in a slump, activating the water element is a first step to restoring balance in that area of your life. Since water creates wood it is also very beneficial to place the water element in the wood-governed areas of Wealth and also Family. Placing too much water in the fire or earth areas (see Bagua) will weaken those vital areas of Reputation, Relationships, Health & Wisdom and should be done so quite skillfully.

Use actual water elements like fountains, koi ponds and fish tanks. Use blues, and black colors, which are linked to water energy, and include mirrors, glass, artwork depicting water. Purchase blue rugs, pillows, bedspreads, or sofas, or incorporate wavy, curvy watery shapes or sculptures to your décor.

And remember, if your space feels like it needs warming up after activating all this water element, simply add some fire and earth elements to balance the water. Make warmer (yang) foods and drinks to counter the cold (yin) of the winter season. Everything should feel balanced so if your décor feels too chilly and wintry, simply adjust the space room by room, by adding warm red pillows or cozy throws, then light some candles or make a flickering fire.

Your home will feel alive and vibrant but also cozy and inviting, and you truly will enjoy and share this holiday season, a home retreat that creates nourishing space as medicine. Incorporating feng shui into your home enables a time-tested wisdom to shelter you, creating a cocoon from winter's harsh breath. From your perch it is easy to draw inspiration, share the seasons joys and dream contentedly.

Happy Holidays!



Adjust the water element with the warmth of a roaring fire.

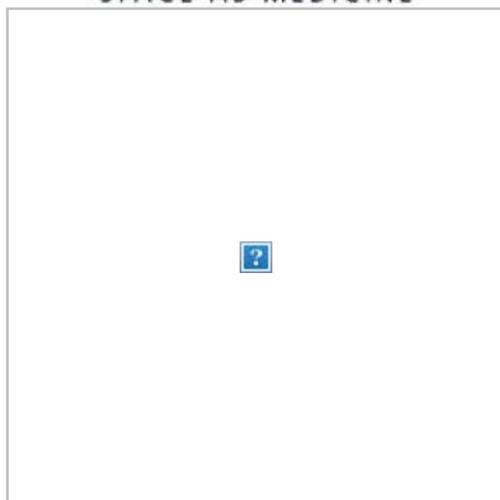
<b>WEALTH &amp; PROSPERITY</b> XUN Wood Southeast Purple	<b>FAME &amp; REPUTATION</b> LI Fire South Red Summer	<b>RELATIONSHIPS</b> KUN Earth Southwest Pink
<b>FAMILY</b> ZHEN Wood East Green Spring	<b>HEALTH</b> TAI JI Earth Center Orange, Yellow Brown	<b>JOY &amp; COMPLETION</b> DUI Metal West White Autumn
<b>KNOWLEDGE &amp; SELF-CULTIVATION</b> GEN Earth Northeast Blue	<b>CAREER &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b> KAN Water North Black & Dark Blue Winter	<b>HELPFUL PEOPLE &amp; TRAVEL</b> QIAN Metal Northeast Grey

The Bagua Map: Front Door

## Mandala Feng Shui



SPACE AS MEDICINE



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