



Moving with the Seasons of Life

Part 2

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Movement never lies. It is a barometer telling the state of the soul's weather to all who can read it.

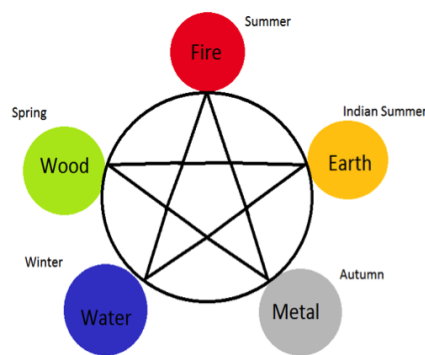
– Martha Graham

Movement can be medicine for the body, mind and spirit. It helps to move stuck energy from the body, and therefore, also clears energetic pathways in the mind. When we move, we bring water, oxygen and nutrients to our brains, all of which helps us think clearer and supports the circulation throughout our bodies.

Movement and sound have always been known in ancient cultures as forms of healing. Through the creative expression of movement, we can work through blocks of pain caused by our own soul's journey. I have witnessed time and time again the powerful healing that can come when one opens to a moving consciousness and listens to the energetic language of the body.

In my article, "Moving with the Seasons of Life," found in the Sept/Oct issue of Energy Magazine, we identified the five ancient elements that were discovered over 5,000 years ago in different parts of the Orient. These elements are Water, Wood, Fire, Earth and Metal. In this article, we will look closer at the Five Element wheel and explore creative movements that may help you heal your body and evolve your mind. You may not initially love these movements as they may be different from the natural rhythms of your primary element, but they can help to transform and

balance physical and emotional blockages, allowing you to have a healthier lifestyle.



Let us revisit the element wheel, shown above. To review, we all have each of the Five Elements within us, but one or two elements may be more dominant than others in times of calm or stress. The elements flow naturally into each other in an organic, clockwise fashion from Water to Wood to Fire and so on. Water feeds Wood to help it grow, as Wood stokes the Fire. Fire creates ash to replenish the soil of Earth, whereas Earth contains minerals, where Metal is mined. When Metal is heated and cooled, it forms drops of Water in condensation and the cycle begins again.

In Chinese Medicine, this clockwise flow is called "The



Mother-Child Cycle,” whereby each element is fed by the element before it. Working with the wheel, energy healers and acupuncturists can see that when an element gets too imbalanced, it may be brought into balance by the “Mother Element,” found just before it on the wheel. When an element has too much or too little energy, stressful issues arise. We call this “being imbalanced.” Continued imbalance can cause health or mental problems. Utilizing the strengths of the “Mother Element,” we support or nourish the “Child Element” on the wheel, bringing it back into harmony.

Woods need to learn to bend and flow with their emotions and in their bodies. My mother, holistic health pioneer Donna Eden, always teaches that Woods are to become like a willow tree, learning to bend (letting emotions roll from them), rather than like an old rigid redwood.

The answer to their health challenges may lie within their “Mother,” which is the element of Water. Woods need to learn to flow more in life. If Woods were to practice the watery movements of Tai Chi, they may

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One can go to a health practitioner for help, but I suggest the use of creative movement and sound, which may be equally beneficial to bring more stability to your body, mind and soul. In this way, we help ourselves heal through movement, bringing harmony within. Movement acts as a form of self-therapy. In this next section, I describe each of the Five Elements again and share some Energy Medicine Dance exercises to help you balance your own rhythm and body.

The Wood Element

Let us start with the Wood Element. People who hold the Wood Element are strong and can create boundaries in their lives easily. They are visionaries, can fight for their goals and will not bend until they win. Yes, they are great role models for other elements to follow, but when they are imbalanced, they can plow their way to the top in order to be the best, not realizing they may have stepped on others to get there.

An imbalanced Wood person can be stubborn in his/her attitudes and may very well feel stiff and rigid in his/her body. They get stuck in their views about life and later on, it may be this stubborn quality that can get in the way of them finding a partner. As well, they can experience joint pain and arthritis when they are elderly.

find more patience and a calmer demeanor when speaking. If Woods can regularly get in the water, like an ocean, river or pool, it would feed their roots and make them softer people.

Water Exercise for Wood Element



Bend your knees and sway from side to side. Take your hands in front of you and begin to make big figure eight movements from the right to the left, turning your hands organically as you move from side to side. Breathe and feel your roots strong and firm in the ground, while your body sways like a willow above. Make the slow sounds of “Shhhh”—as if calming a baby. Imagine this water quality moving into your joints and feeding your mind more open views and visions.

The Water Element

People who exhibit the archetype of Water are creative artists, diving into their soul’s journey to bring out poetry and art from their own expressions. They can be playful or philosophical. Yet most Water people tend to be shy and retreat into their own world where they cannot be reached. Imbalanced, they may have difficulty finding words to express their feelings



and depression can develop, leaving them feeling as if no one understands them.

Metaphorically, when they are drowning in the watery depths of their own experiences, Waters feel as if they cannot breathe or see a way out of their difficulties. Alone, they create illusions in their world, like ripples forming in the water. Fear creeps in causing them to freeze and they can literally stop moving forward in their lives. Movement with breath-work would be beneficial for a Water. Bringing more oxygen into the body can literally move energy, allowing for more space both in the mind and body to re-examine thoughts and feelings in a more positive light.

The Water lesson is to realize that there is a way out of their dark ocean and that they need only to swim to the surface in order to see the light. Looking to the wheel, the element before Water is Metal. Mama Metal energy comes in to help make the Water energy crystallize so that it is pliable enough to see and move towards. Metal energy brings in the emotions of hope and inspiration during a dark, challenging time.

In addition, Waters tend to hold a lot of water in their skin, almost to the point of edema. The archetypal movement of Metal is yoga, which is all about stretching the muscles and limbs, good for helping move the water (edema) out. The meditation and breath work of yoga is also effective for it brings Waters out of their inner depths to see the light.

Metal Exercise for Water Element



With your back on the floor, reach your arm to your opposite leg, then again reach to the other side. Imagine that you are a piece of seaweed at the bottom of the ocean, stretching for the light above you. Become

a bit more organic with this motion, stretching opposite arm and leg as you twist your body from side-to-side. Breathe as you move and bring in the sound of “Whoooo” -- the sound of wind through a cave.

The Metal Element

People who show strong Metal element aspects aspire to higher standards. They are perfectionists, who wrestle issues to bring out the best from themselves. Metals are on such a spiritual journey that sometimes they block the realities of life. They live in their heads and therefore can disconnect from their bodies, as well. Metals can appear as if they have a “greater-than-thou” attitude with their heads held high, as they glide proudly into a room. They will never show their emotions outwardly and can form a hard exterior, like armor. This protects them from being hurt, but it also does not let anyone in. Metals can stuff the emotion of grief within them, which can lead to skin issues, digestive problems and constipation. Imbalanced, the Metal person can detach from people at a moment’s notice, even from their best friends if they feel impeded on their spiritual paths. Metal’s lesson is to learn to work with their feelings and relationship connections. Who best to teach them this than their “Mother,” the Earth? Metals need a movement that brings them out of their heads and connects them back to their bodies and other people. Community dancing and natural dances such as belly dancing, Hawaiian, African, and reggae dancing can bring them back to this compassionate connection. These grounded dances are perfect for getting us out of our heads and into our bodies. Being in a movement class where there is a connection to others will be hard for the solo Metal, but this is what they need for better balance.

Earth Exercise for Metal Element



With your bare feet on the soil or grass, stand and feel your connection to the earth. Widely stretch open your arms, as you also open your chest. Meet your hands in front of you, as if you are holding a big beach ball and round your back. Go back and forth, breathing in

as you grasp your world and as you let go, move your arms back and make the sound “Ssssss”—as if you are letting go of everything you hold dear. Breathe in and out as you continue this motion.



The Earth Element

Earth personalities are very compassionate. Like a tending mother, they take care of everyone, leaving very little time or energy for themselves. Their lessons are to give back to themselves. Imbalanced, they can be like an over protective and meddling mother. It is more difficult for an Earth to metabolize food or situations, so they tend to be very curvy or round, holding onto a lot more fat in their bodies than other elements would. When energy gets stuck in an Earth element body, they tend to have circulation problems, leading to possible blood clots and tumors.

The Fire Element

Let us look at the last element on our wheel—Fire. People with the strength of the Fire element are dramatic. They are the life of the party, bringing joyous laughter and positive outlooks on life. Like happy-go-lucky optimists, Fires can have a sense of being ungrounded. Therefore, they can seem very scattered and disorganized in their lives, in their emotions and sometimes even in their relationships. The “Mother” of Fire is Wood.

The Wood movement brings focus for better grounding to make necessary decisions in life. It is helpful for

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Earth’s “Mother” is Fire. The Fire element is all about blood and circulation. Earths love when things are in harmony, so quick stressful change can be hard on them. Fires metabolize situations quickly, and they usually have quick metabolisms as well. Earths need a form of activity that helps them speed up their metabolism to allow their bodies to absorb fat efficiently. Fast African dance, salsa, zumba or aerobic dancing would be great for their unique body types. Leaving the house and family once a week to do something for themselves, like a dance class, would be a healthy balance for the Earth person who tends to everyone else’s needs.

Fire Exercise for Earth Element



A few times a week, put on your favorite fast paced rock ‘n roll, pop or world music and dance for about 20 minutes. Just dance, joyously and wildly like no one is watching! You can even do this while cleaning the house. As you cool down, sit comfortably and hold your heart chakra (located in the center of your chest) and bring in feelings of self-love with the humming sound of “Mmmm.”

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a Fire to go towards a wood movement like martial arts, which is organized and disciplined. Decisions and commitments are also hard for Fires to make and keep; this is part of the Fire’s lesson. Fires tend to wear happy masks that make everything seem as if all is fine, but then they experience shocking bursts of anger that rage out of control, burning down everyone in their path. Martial arts carry a certain quality of aggression that is expressed outwardly and directly, still maintaining a sense of boundary and discipline. Drumming too, can help maintain a structure where a Fire can keep a steady rhythm and therefore help balance their own fiery natures.

Wood Exercise for Fire Element




Put on some drumming music and begin to make movements of stomping, kicking, blocking and chopping with your arms and legs, as if you are releasing aggression and moving obstacles away from your body. Use the quick sound “Shhhh”—to express your stuck emotions. After the music has stopped, sit down to calm and ground yourself, placing both hands on the floor in

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front of you. Breathe and feel your heart beat alive and steady as it comes to a rest.

Experiment with the Five Elements for yourself and find which element you connect with the most. Movement may be a medicine for your own healing within your explorative journey. When we learn the qualities of each of the Five Elements, we begin to find compassion for those around us, knowing that we are all on a path of discovery and evolution. Our relationships become easier as we learn to relate to each other's rhythms. We can better understand the ways each element flows into the next and we can begin to recognize that by shifting and stretching our own lives, we can meet each other's needs as well as our own.

In the Orient, they say that the Sixth Element is "*Sympathy for the Self*." Learning the language of our body's unique energy, we create an inner language as a way to listen and connect to ourselves through movement. In this way, we become our own therapists, shedding our inner obstacles in order to really love our whole being. Bringing sympathy to ourselves and to our path's lessons, we dance and let go of the mistakes we have made, and eventually stand in complete and utter Self-love, ready to learn new dance steps on our evolving adventure. 



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