

## Using Vaastu to Create Harmony

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Modern western building design and architecture principles aim towards building structures that current technology makes feasible. Their primary purpose is to demonstrate what can now be accomplished with the new building materials. Interior designers then attempt to create a happy and harmonious environment by careful selection and pleasing arrangement of different elements within the home. They usually start with a functional furniture arrangement. They then add decorative elements -- color, texture, effective lighting and accessories -- to create a satisfying or dramatic atmosphere.

In India, the building guidelines and interior designers are primarily concerned with harnessing the positive forces in the land and the cosmos to create a harmonious environment. This design approach is known as **Vaastu**. A home that has the optimal combination and balance of forces is said to be Vaastu favorable. Such a building serves both rational and emotional purposes.

In India, Vaastu design principles are taken seriously as an art and a science. A person's quality of life can be determined by how favorably his dwelling is laid out in relation to its surroundings. Individuals and corporations would not think of building any structure (be it a home or an office building), or purchasing a property, without consulting a Vaastu designer. Vaastu has deep roots in the Indian culture with local bookstores devoting more shelf space to this subject.

The universe and everything in it is composed of one or more of the five basic elements: Earth (solid), Water, Fire (heat), Air and Ether. Vaastu design principles bring in harmony between their universal presence to their minute presence in the human bodies. These elements will create harmony if grouped in a positive, creative sequence. Bad results occur when these elements exist in a destructive arrangement. Vaastu expert examines the house, both inside and outside, for possible relationships between conflicting elements and tries to correct them.

He starts by carefully inspecting the site to determine if the building is in correct alignment with the landscape. Ideally the ground should be sloping either towards North or East; the ground elevation should be higher towards South or West. The higher elevation will shield the site from negative influences. View of water (stream, pool, lake) on North or East sides is beneficial. He then evaluates the interior room locations integrated with their functionalities. For example, the presence of bedroom at a location where fire (i.e. kitchen) should be present can translate to quarrels and sleep disorders among the bedroom occupants. Alternatively, having the kitchen in the correct location will translate to good health among the residents. By carefully choosing the room functionalities and aligning the objects in that room, the strength of the positive energies in each room can be increased. Under the umbrella of Vaastu guidelines are a few that can be put under 'core recommendations'.

The five basic elements are not the only factors that control the environment. As per Vedic astrology, the location of planets in ones horoscope at the time of ones birth, will determine the direction of ones life. The influence and strength of each planet is a function of its location in the horoscope. By following the Vaastu guidelines, the residents can counteract to a limited extent, the effects of an ill disposed planet.

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