



"I" of the Needle

Traditional Chinese
Medicine and the model
of Cooperative Care

Miami Acupuncture and Herbal Solutions
Blake Estape, Oriental Medicine Physician

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Introduction



“One of the first conditions of happiness is that the link between Man and Nature shall not be broken.”

- Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy

You would think that rare is the person who'd wake up and say, "I'm *so* excited to get stabbed today!" In reality there are millions of Americans who have had that precise thought. An estimated one to ten percent¹ of the U.S. population has tried acupuncture and that number is growing. Why? Because acupuncture - and its wider umbrella of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) - helps people feel better.

The criticisms of modern healthcare are well known, but the intention of this book is not to disparage conventional medicine. What we are finding as health issues continue to challenge society, is that a wider range of tools are necessary in the effort to maintain wellness. Not just health, but wellness. Since interest in TCM has increased, many studies show that the combination of conventional and traditional therapy gets the best results.

There's a lot of information, assumptions and conjecture about TCM. Barriers exist within and around the profession that can make things confusing. In the next few pages I will introduce you to what TCM is and is not, as well as about myself and my treatment philosophy. During my time as a teacher I learned the value of information, so I will share as much as I can.

This ebook serves a number of purposes. I understand that you are likely reading it to decide whether it's worth investing your time and resources, because you want to feel better. Sections are devoted to the current science behind TCM as it's understood and how it can create measurable improvement in your life. If you're mostly interested in the facts then feel free to jump to the appropriate section.



Throughout the book I will insert snippets of thoughts, strategies and tips I call Acu-Points. I use these often in my clinic to get good, quick results which you can begin right away.

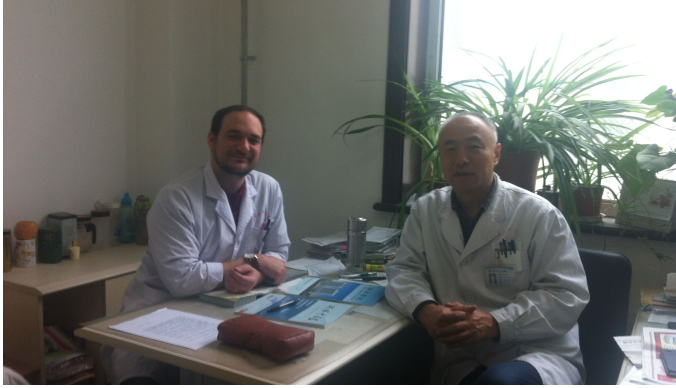
However, there is value in understanding the theory behind this medicine and how it fits into the big picture. TCM is a system of healthcare with important differences from conventional western treatment, not just in the *how* things are treated but also the *why*. Wellness is a partnership between patient and practitioner, aiming toward substantive change instead of just symptom management.

If you're asking whether TCM is appropriate for you here is the simple answer: you get what you put in. Needles can take the pain away, herbs can correct the problem, and you can get back to business. Millions of people use it for pain management, anxiety, insomnia, infertility - dealing with specific issues as they crop up. But TCM can also be a blueprint, a way of approaching life holistically.

Whatever you're looking for, I am happy to offer what service I can to make your life better. We live in a demanding environment and my purpose is to improve modern lifestyles through ancient wisdom, because it helped me a great deal.



Blake Estape, L.Ac.



I did my acupuncture training in Hebei Medical University, Hebei China. The program was five years and included two years of internship in hospitals alongside MDs. Besides rotations in the acupuncture and Tui Na massage departments, I also assisted in the oncology, neurology, gastroenterology, proctology and osteology departments.

I returned to the U.S. in 2015 in order to bring what I learned to my home community. I earned national licensure as a Diplomat of Oriental Medicine with the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) and by 2019 opened my own clinic in Pinecrest. I am mostly a traditional Chinese-style acupuncturist. However, I have had training in other styles and use them frequently depending on the condition.

My interest in Chinese medicine and philosophy began when I was a teenager. I was always anxious, never comfortable in my environment. Over time my anxiety led to life choices that had negative consequences; I was isolated, angry, and I held a lot of this in my neck and shoulders. By 18 I was suffering from chronic headaches and stiff neck so severe I couldn't turn my head.

Our family library had a book called the *Dao De Jing* (alternatively written *Tao Te Jing*), a book of old Chinese philosophy. It encourages the reader to take lessons from nature and 'go with the flow.' Although I can't say I understood a lot of it, the small verses were comforting and resonated with me. To learn more I began taking tai chi and qigong classes, as well as pursuing acupuncture treatments for my muscle pains. All of these systems follow similar values to what I found in the *Dao De Jing*.

After a few acupuncture treatments I began to see great results. My neck was more mobile and I was getting fewer headaches. By releasing the physical consequences of anxiety, treatments also helped me get a handle on my emotional issues. The tai chi and qigong put action to the principles I was studying, teaching me the important links between thought and action, mind and body.

The decision to go to China wasn't so much mine as it was put upon me. While visiting the country as part of my tai chi group, I mentioned off-hand that it might be interesting to live here for a year. My mother always told her kids that what we put out into the universe comes true. I don't know that I ever believed her, but by the time I returned from the trip changes were already in motion.



While I was gone I had been quietly fired from my job in a restaurant, without notice. I was between semesters at school and had no idea what I wanted to study. Nothing was coming together, until I got a call from my mother about a strange opportunity.

A relative of someone she worked with ran a non-profit in a Chinese village. He happened to be in Miami with a volunteer who ran an English language school. After hearing I was interested in visiting China he gave me a call and we organized a meet-up.



We sat down for a chat over burgers at Johnny Rockets in Sunset Place. By the end of the meeting I had a job teaching English in Shijiazhuang China, and had promised to volunteer my free time teaching underprivileged kids in nearby villages. I was 20 years old.

I still don't know if fate or circumstance were responsible for me moving across the planet, but it's where I ended up. For ten years I immersed myself in the culture and philosophy of China that I'd begun to understand in the *Dao De Jing* several years before. The lessons I took from this experience helped me address the root cause of why I was so unhappy. I came back because maybe these lessons could help someone else, too.

THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

I was standing in line at Trader Joe's chatting with the cashier. When he learned about my profession he said, 'Acupuncture? That's where you poke people with needles and stuff right?' That's of course true, but the needles are such a small part of traditional Chinese medicine. It's the application of a whole different way of thinking about health.

This is evident in the way many TCM physicians speak. If you ask them how it works, many will go into a discussion about qi, five element theory and meridians. To an outsider this sounds like hocus-pocus nonsense, but for those trained in TCM it's just how we see the world. Unfortunately the vocabulary often takes away from the real, verifiable science behind the system.

For those with an interest in the theory behind TCM I will give a very rough rundown of the main points. Although this won't impact how effective your treatments are, it will help you understand the process. What's more, if you apply these theories to your lifestyle they can mean very positive changes in yourself and your environment.

What is Qi?

Qi has a broad range of meanings. Depending on who you're talking to it will mean one of two things; energy, or oxygen. The more abstract idea of energy is usually what practitioners mean when they talk about qi. But what kind of energy is it?

Hold your arms out like you're hugging a giant ball, fingers straight. After a little while you'll feel a throbbing or tingling in your fingers, or a mild current running through your arms. That is what 'qi' feels like, and it's the motive force responsible for all the functions of your body.

Qi is also translated as oxygen, and indeed science confirms that acupuncture points have a higher partial pressure of oxygen than elsewhere². Whether qi is translated more literally or abstractly, increasing, decreasing and moving that energy is the essence of treatment.



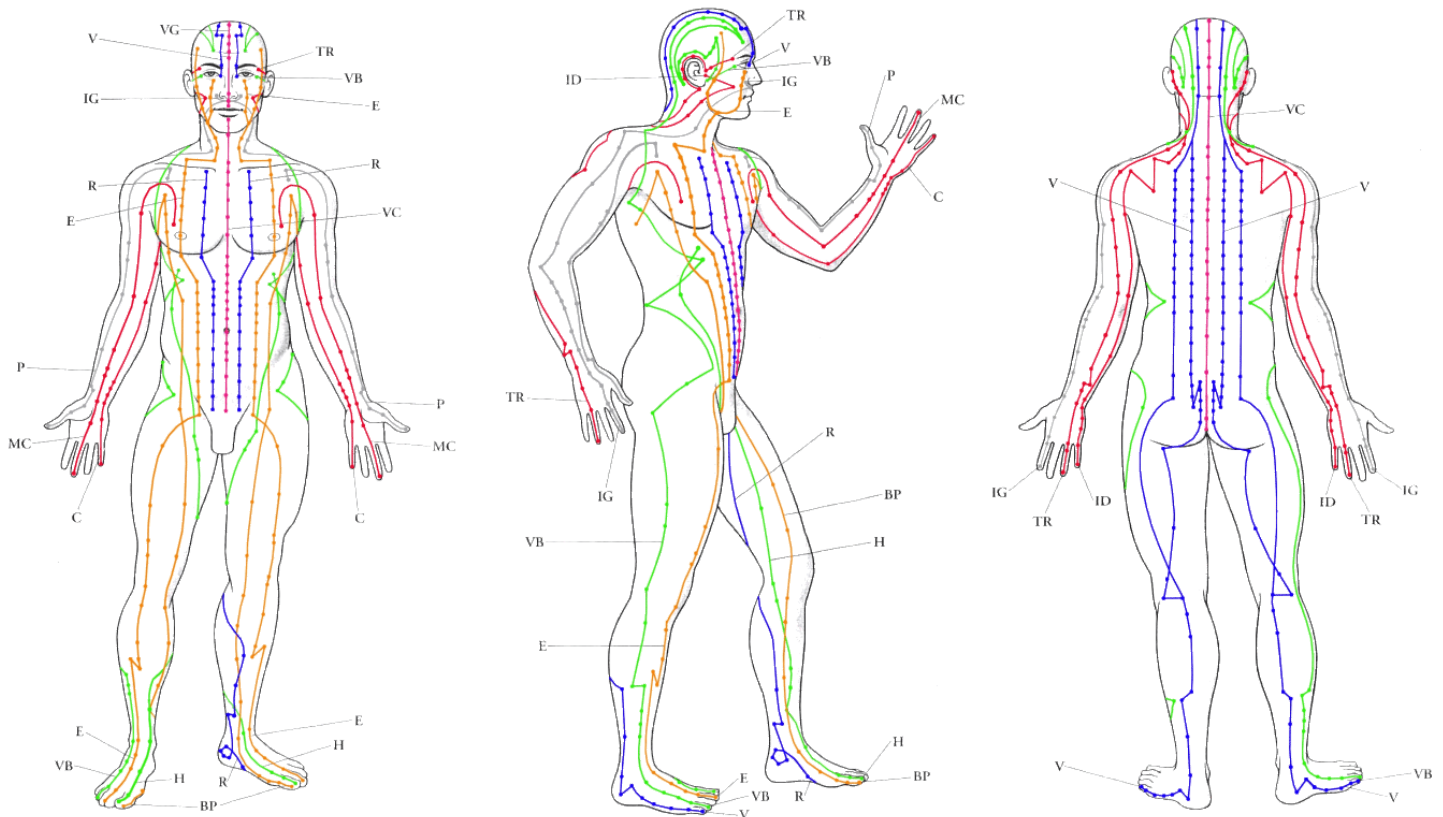
The movement of 'qi' is a big part of meditative movement exercises like Qigong and Taichi. These practices are often used like yoga to help manage pain and promote wellbeing, especially in the elderly.

What are Meridians?

Meridian theory states that there are closed-circuit channels throughout the body, very similar to blood vessels. It is through these channels that qi flows. Each meridian is responsible for a different system such as digestion, reproduction and immunity. However, as a holistic practice these meridians go beyond just the physical.

Practitioner's believe that the meridians govern emotional responses as well. The movement of qi - or lack thereof - can result in the 'symptom' of unpleasant emotions. In TCM there is no separation between what the mind experiences and how the body reacts - they occur mutually.

One common misconception is that the meridians are organ systems. Since these meridians have names like 'the Lung Channel' patient's may be worried that their organs have some issue. This isn't the case, and the names are used as part of our diagnostic system to describe a group of functions, not the organ itself.



What is Yin Yang and Five Element Theory?

The foundation of Chinese medicine is based on the idea of Yin and Yang, complimenting forces that support and restrain one another. This complementarity is what practitioners mean when they talk about ‘balance.’ There is a dynamic relationship between these forces and their relative balance is how we define health.

I could write a book on Yin Yang alone and won’t go into too much detail here. What is useful to understand is that the active impulses must be tempered by rest, and stagnation must be galvanized by movement. Translated into medicine, something like inflammation (a yang condition) is reduced by anti-inflammatory herbs and treatments (yin). Depression (a yin condition) is treated by inspiring movement and promoting a sense of positive well-being (yang).

The Five Elements (earth, metal, water, wood, fire) are an extension of this balance. Like meridians, the elements are part of an interrelated system which describes illnesses, emotions, and body functions. In the same way as Yin and Yang these elements support and control one another. Each of these subjects have undergone centuries of refinement and debate among generations of doctors. They call us ‘practitioners’ because there is always more to learn and discover, despite the fact that this system of medicine is thousands of years old.



Outside of the context of medicine, these ideas can be helpful in guiding us in our day-to-day lifestyles. Concepts such as mutual reliance, the necessity of positive and negative, and the ways these things combine are unique to us in the west and may help put new priorities into focus.

WHAT SCIENCE SAYS

I was promoting acupuncture one day outside of a pilates studio, trying to engage people as they walked by. One gentleman smirked when I asked if he wanted to learn more, saying ‘I don’t believe any of that magic nonsense.’ When I tried to talk with him further he turned his back and walked away.

This isn’t an uncommon exchange. One of the most difficult things about sharing acupuncture is overcoming the belief that it’s pseudo-science. In reality, there is plenty of research that proves acupuncture works.

How Does It Work?

Let’s begin by exploring the method of action. Various studies have found that acupuncture utilizes the body’s biomechanical systems to enact change. It does this via several pathways, and the depth of the effects is still being explored.

As early as the 1950’s we learned that acupuncture increases endogenous opioid peptides and neurotransmitters^{3 4}. Enkephalin, b-endorphin, endomorphin and dynorphin are the naturally-occurring opioid

peptides which are released with acupuncture and serve to attenuate pain. Mediation of serotonin is also noted, which may explain how acupuncture helps in the treatment of chronic pain.

Furthermore, trials revealed that acupuncture treatment increases the release of substance P and anti-inflammatory cytokines like interleukin-10, while simultaneously reducing pro-inflammatory markers like tumor necrosis factor-a⁵. The dual action of vasodilation and reduction of inflammation are responsible for acupuncture’s ability to provide relief.

One common reason why people are skeptical of acupuncture is confusion about how you can put a needle far from the site of dysfunction and still get results. Researchers believe this is due to a kinase cascade, where stimulation of tissue creates a chain reaction of cellular adjustment that can enact change at a distal location⁶. In addition, ultrasound imaging reveals that TCM meridians closely follow interstitial connective tissue cleavage planes⁷ which may conduct biomechanical changes more easily throughout the body.



TCM is endorsed by the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, **Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**, and the **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)** for many conditions.

What Does It Treat?

I see a wide range of people in my clinic, but below I'll make a short list of the most common conditions in no particular order:

- Headaches/Migraines
- Stress and Anxiety
- Depression
- Gastric upset and constipation
- General wellness
- Insomnia
- Pain (muscular, joint, spinal)
- Immune support
- Post-stroke care
- Bell's Palsy, TMD

The World Health Organization has released a list of illnesses and conditions that acupuncture can help treat. Please note that these are only conditions for which studies have been performed. The scope of what TCM can treat is much larger, as proven in clinics. If you have a condition not listed here and wish to know if TCM can help, schedule a free consultation to learn more about your specific case.

There are over a hundred items listed, so I will organize the most common ones by body system:

ENT and Neurological Diseases

- Headache and Migraine
- Allergic Rhinitis
- Acne vulgaris
- Craniocerebral injury, stroke
- Facial spasm
- Earache
- Meniere's Disease
- TMJ/TMD
- Facial pain / Trigeminal Neuralgia
- Sjorgen's Syndrome
- Bell's Palsy
- Post-Stroke paralysis
- Epistaxis, nose bleeds
- Raynaud's Syndrome
- Tourette's Syndrome
- Vascular dementia

Musculoskeletal Pain

- Knee pain
- Back pain
- Neck pain
- Osteoarthritis
- Frozen Shoulder
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Sciatica
- Tennis/Golfer's Elbow
- Gout
- Fibromyalgia
- Diabetic Neuralgia
- Simple sprains
- Postoperative pain
- Post-surgery recovery
- Nerve root compression (radiculopathy)

(continued on next page)

Psycho-Emotional

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Competitive Stress Syndrome, performance anxiety
- Schizophrenia
- Cardiac neurosis
- Insomnia
- Tobacco and drug dependence (opioids, cocaine, marijuana, heroin)

Gastrointestinal and Digestive Diseases

- Peptic ulcers
- Gastritis
- Gastric spasm
- Gastroenteritis
- Dysentery
- Cholecystitis
- Gallstones, Liver Stones
- Diabetes mellitus
- Obesity
- Ulcerative Cholitis
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Nausea and Vomiting

Obstetrics

- Malposition of Fetus (breech presentation)
- Induction of Labor
- Morning Sickness
- Female infertility
- Labor pain
- Lactation deficiency

Genitourinary Disorders, Sexual Dysfunction and Menstrual Issues

- Dysmenorrhea (period pain)
- Low ovarian reserve
- Male Sexual Dysfunction (ED)
- Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)
- Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)
- Urethral Syndrome
- Urinary retention
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Bladder and kidney stones

Miscellaneous

- Chemotherapy support
- Hypertension/Hypotension (blood pressure disease)
- Leukopenia (low white blood cell count)
- Bronchial asthma
- Cancer pain
- Hepatitis
- Hyperlipaemia
- Herpes Zoster
- Neurodermatitis
- Pruritus



The fact that acupuncture and TCM can treat so much has garnered skepticism. Oriental medicine has its limits, approach treatment with reasonable expectations. However, the wide-ranging positive effects have been scientifically confirmed.

FAQ

Does It Hurt?

By far the most frequently asked question about acupuncture is whether it is painful. This fear stems from years of doctors visits where large needles are used to draw blood or deliver injections. While acupuncture does use needles, it is about as different from the doctor's office as night and day.

Acupuncture needles range from between 0.15 to .30 millimeters thick. By comparison, the needles used in doctor's offices are 1.15 millimeters, more or less. In fact, an acupuncture needle is more comparable to a single strand of hair (.18mm) than a typical needle!

Often patients don't feel the needles at all, but sometimes there can be a brief shock, throb or tingling. This is a positive sign of the nervous system waking up.

How Long Does It Take?

Acupuncture employs the body's own nervous and immune system to do its work. A person's constitution and the nature of their illness will all have a bearing on how long acupuncture takes to achieve full effect. That being said, patients will often begin to feel results within the first couple treatments.

Because it directly influences the autonomic nervous system, acupuncture is a method of healing that works with the body instead of forcing it with pharmaceuticals. By its nature, such a system takes longer, but can achieve more deep-rooted recovery.

Is It Safe?

Traditional Chinese Medicine is completely safe when performed by a licensed practitioner. Acupuncture in particular is well-known for achieving great results merely by placing a few needles.

Herbal medicine can have powerful results with a fraction of the uncomfortable side-effects of pharmaceuticals. Most of the ingredients are plant-sourced and thus vegan friendly. Rigorous checks are performed to ensure only the highest grade ingredients are used in clinical practice.

How many treatments do I need?

This depends on the condition. Ordinarily, a treatment cycle ranges from between 5 to 12 visits for acute cases. Chronic illness may take significantly longer.

In my clinic, I perform a small reevaluation at the beginning of every visit, then a longer one at the end of a treatment cycle. This helps inform how many more treatments may be needed.

If I do acupuncture, do I have to stop X?

No, acupuncture is excellent in combination with any other healthcare treatments, PT, exercise or mindfulness you may already be doing. Things get a little more complex with herbal medicine and would depend on the specific case.

TREATING YOURSELF

Treatment with TCM is an act of cooperation between a practitioner and their patient. Pharmaceuticals are amazing in their ability to force a response, but the drawbacks are side-effects and toxicity. Acupuncture and herbal medicines limit these side-effects but the trade off is a bigger 'buy in'.

What do I mean? Effective treatment doesn't stop at the clinic door. Dysfunctions don't often arise spontaneously, they come from somewhere. Holistic practice always considers what we call 'root and branch': the root being the underlying causative factor(s), and the branch being the outward manifestations and symptoms of disease.

In order to get to the root of a problem greater effort is needed from the patient. Changes to lifestyle, exercise routines, interpersonal relationships, diet and more may be required. This builds a foundation for sustained improvement, with the aim of needing less intervention. Symptom management can be achieved with needles and herbs, but real change takes more work.

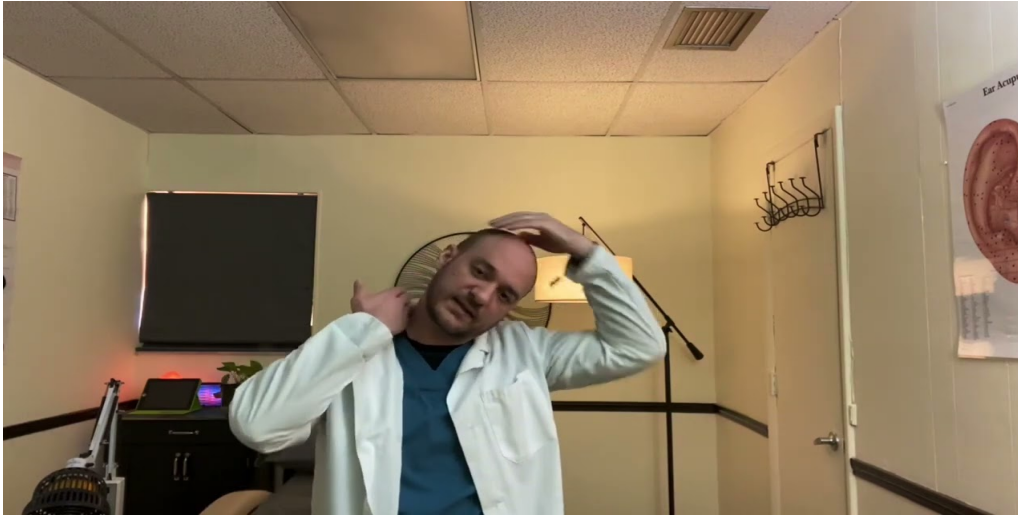
I sit with every patient, going over more than their symptoms in order to pinpoint areas of improvement. Key to recovery is implementing various tools and strategies that interrupt causes of dysfunction. I will list the most common here that you can use right away to start feeling better.

Neck and Shoulder Pain

The neck and shoulders are a frequent area of pain and tension. Those with an active lifestyle might injure their shoulders exercising, or playing repetitive sports like tennis. Many - myself included - tend to hold stress in their shoulders which may cause chronic tightness.

Imbalance of the trapezius, scalene, levator scapula and other structural muscles of the head and neck can have wide-spread symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, shoulder pain and nausea. For these patients I have found a consistent stretch routine to be instrumental in their care.

Neck and Shoulder Pain (Cont.)



Modalities like chiropractic are excellent at correcting misalignments caused by tight muscles, but don't address the cause. Physical Therapy puts more of a focus on strengthening to prevent injury. Even acupuncture's ability to ease muscular strain and reduce inflammation is temporary. The video above is a general routine that I have found to be very effective at improving base range of motion and easing pain.

Understand that muscle cramps, spasm and tightness are often the result of fatigue. If

your neck and shoulders are working too hard, they're susceptible to injury. Spend a week paying close attention to what your neck is doing throughout the day. How do you sit at the computer? What are your hobbies and how do they affect your upper body? Do you tend to wear a bag on just one side? Which side do you sleep on? Does the pain get worse or better depending on temperature? By gathering information, we can eliminate causes and reduce fatigue. Once the neck and shoulders recover, strengthening exercises are recommended.



Diet may be playing a subtle role in discomfort. In general, stimulants have a greater affect on the upper part of the body and should be avoided. Pro-inflammatory foods like red meat, nightshade vegetables and gluten can all contribute to muscle pain.

Gastric issues, constipation and diarrhea

Your gastro-intestinal tract is made up of smooth muscle designed to adapt to change. It is sensitive to emotional state, diet, movement and environment. The drawback of adaptability is that your GI tract will do what you ask. Operating under high loads of stress, poor diet, or inappropriate exercise puts strain on your gut that over time will result in dysfunction.

Questions to ask yourself:

Is my issue worse at any particular time of day? Are there any relieving factors? Do I

react better or poorly to a certain temperature? Does stress or anger seem to affect my condition? What about certain kinds of food, or the time I eat?

In order of difficulty to treat, problems in the GI tract are caused by excess, deficiency, or a combination of both. In every case, the initial stage of treatment involves reducing what we ask it to do. Here are general rules of thumb for anyone suffering from gastric issues:

AVOID

Spicy food	Overeating / undereating	Sedentary lifestyle
Rich food	Spending too long submerged in water	Excessively hot or cold temperatures
Alcohol	Direct cold air on the stomach and abdomen	Inconsistent eating patterns
Cold and/or raw food	Eating while doing mentally taxing activities (work)	Unnecessary/excess supplements
Processed sugar	Ruminating	Overly exciting or stressful activities



When making changes to lifestyle, keep to it for at least 2 to 3 weeks. While some changes may see immediate results, many require consistency over time.

Stress, Anxiety and Emotional Dis-Ease

Rates of stress related conditions, anxiety disorders and Diseases of Despair have been steadily increasing. 1 in 5 American adults say that their mental health has declined over the last year⁸. The American Psychological Association describes anxiety among 18-23 year-olds as crisis levels⁹. More than ever before, it's important to take steps in maintaining mental and emotional wellbeing.

The consequences of emotional dis-ease aren't just in your head. Stress and anxiety have a negative impact on the immune system¹⁰, inflammation¹¹, even cancer¹². Holistic practice believes that any physical ailment has an emotional component, and western science confirms this. Therefore, everyone can benefit from mental wellness practices.

I begin the process of stress management with two strategies; physical and psychological. Physically, we tend to hold stress in specific areas of the body. Activities like diaphragmatic breathing, body scanning and meditative movement like yoga or tai chi helps identify and release areas of stress congestion. Psychologically, mindfulness is an excellent if misunderstood practice.

When I talk about mindfulness with patients, many reply 'I just can't sit still for that long.' They're reacting to meditation, but while meditation is mindfulness not all mindfulness is meditation. I define it as any activity in which you are present in the moment. This can include gardening, dancing, cooking, painting and many others. The benefit of mindfulness is a focus on the instant and the things you can control. Discover what mindfulness is for you and practice religiously.

The trickier part of mindfulness is the follow-through. Anyone who puts concerted effort into mindfulness will see the benefits in the moment, that's why we feel so good after a yoga class or a gym session. What we want is for those benefits to persist all the time.

It won't happen spontaneously. We have to apply the things we feel and learn in every moment of our day, and that only happens with consistent effort. Mindfulness is a habit and like any habit, requires reinforcement. Try to remember to pause at different times throughout your day and try a few seconds of mindfulness.



Some companies that provide time and space for their employees to practice mindfulness:

- Google
- Aetna
- General Mills
- Apple
- Goldman Sachs
- Intel

Old-Fashioned Maintenance

In TCM there's something called the Three Treasures. These are Qi (气), Shen (神), and Jing (精). These are energy, spirit and essence respectively. Don't worry about the off phrases, I just use them here as a way to think of how to structure your lifestyle. Guard your treasures and you will be prosperous.

Qi, Energy:

In a strictly mechanical sense humans are fancy rechargeable machines. Replenishing our energy requires the appropriate fuel and activity. You can't pump low-grade gasoline through a high-performance engine and expect it run great forever, just like you can't eat garbage and suffer no consequences. We also need movement to keep things from gunking up. Some form of exercise - whether it's walking, swimming, chasing after kids, gardening, etc. - is always a beneficial thing.

However, be wary of those activities which will deplete energy unnecessarily. Forcing yourself to stay up late, overdoing it at the gym, working excessive hours or generally trying to do too much are examples. Moderation in all things is the motto.

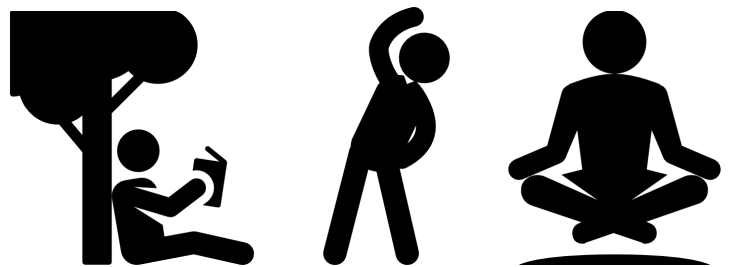
Shen, Spirit:

This is what is meant when people say it 'feeds the soul'. Activities which are fulfilling on this level are different for everyone and don't necessarily correspond to a spiritual practice. Perhaps volunteering at a church is that for you, or maybe it's sitting in nature for a while. Often some measure of mindfulness is helpful; meditation, art, music and so on. The extent to which our mind affects our health is proof that this sort of practice is essential and should be made a priority. Endeavor to feed your spirit at least as often as you're meant to exercise.

Jing, Essence:

Essence is a finite resource. You can look at it as potential - if you squander the resource, you lose out on potential. Some activities unnecessarily deplete essence, thus conservation is needed. Appropriate management of resources (time, energy, materials) provides the necessary substance for the other treasures to function in a healthy manner. Make sure you always balance movement with rest, work with play, and surplus with modesty.

Don't let the Chinese words turn you off, look at the concept: essence is the stuff, energy is the movement, and spirit is the compass. Balance means managing the three treasures so that you have just what you need for now, and banking it for use far into the future.



Mindfulness Challenge

If you want a fun challenge to explore styles of mindfulness, or just need a good kick into gear, try this mindfulness challenge. There's no 'winning', it's about the process, so enjoy and try not to approach this with the idea of achieving anything. Print and check the items if it will help.



Do one task every day for one month.

- 1. Create a short, simple mantra for the month. Something to help keep you focused.
- 2. Sit quietly with a cup of tea or coffee. Don't plan, don't scroll, just breathe.
- 3. Do a small job you have been putting off.
- 4. Avoid social media, the news and group chats as much as possible.
- 5. Do something nice for someone else without being asked and without expectation.
- 6. Commute in silence.
- 7. Give a heartfelt and genuine thanks to someone for something they've done.
- 8. Throughout the day, pause to scan your body for muscle tension.
- 9. Brush your teeth with your non-dominant hand. Feel how it's different.
- 10. Take a couple minutes to breathe naturally with no other distractions.
- 11. Write a small list of things you're grateful for.
- 12. Set aside some time to just listen to your favorite music.
- 13. Sit for a meal and do nothing but eat; no phone, no conversation, no TV.
- 14. Compliment three people about something you appreciate, not their looks.
- 15. Spend ten minutes thinking about what you've accomplished in the last year.
- 16. Before bed, write down something you appreciate about yourself.
- 17. Pay attention to how you react to situations.
- 18. Spend ten minutes thinking about what you'd like to accomplish this year.
- 19. Start the day with some light stretching.
- 20. Do something nice for yourself.
- 21. Sit quietly. Identify three things you can hear, smell, see, and touch.
- 22. Try to focus just on what you're doing in the moment. Practice intention.
- 23. Break routine.
- 24. Take a ten minute walk with no destination. Just enjoy being outside.
- 25. Go to bed early.
- 26. Learn something new. A few words in a new language, or interesting facts.
- 27. Take a nap.
- 28. Work up a sweat.
- 29. Watch something that makes you laugh.
- 30. Hug somebody.

IN CONCLUSION

I wanted there to be something for everyone in this short e-book. It began with my history and philosophy because those can be important in order to understand how I approach treatment. Traditional medicine is a cooperative healing system, there has to be a rapport between patient and practitioner.

Others may find it helpful to dive into the specifics of the medicine. Having a grasp on basic concepts can help develop a different perspective. As a Miami native, living in China for ten years gave me plenty of time to compare. Really immersing myself in the culture taught me a lot, things which I think could be useful in the modern Western world.

One of those concepts is how everything is connected. How we live our lives is the backdrop to our medical picture. Changing how we live can shift the whole landscape. Stretches, diet and mindfulness techniques are helpful both physically, but also as a way to keep ourselves accountable and focused on our recovery.

Finally, I wanted to present acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine as a legitimate healing method supported by real science. Hopefully I have shown that the persistent idea of TCM as quackery is false. Time and again trials prove what practitioners have seen in clinics for thousands of years; this stuff works.

If you have any questions about Chinese medicine, any of the content in this book or specific concerns about a health condition, I would be happy to help. You can email miamiacusolutions@gmail.com or call (786) 514-3942 and I will answer whatever I can. Until then, I hope that something in this book can help you feel a little more settled in our hectic modern life. As the Chinese are fond of saying, 慢走 man zou - go slow.

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Government Policy Resources:

Department of Veterans Affairs: <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/professional-resources/Acupuncture.asp>

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services:

<https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/view/technology-assessments.aspx?TAid=19&bc=AgAQAAAAAAA>