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Welcome!

You are probably reading this right now because you are searching for some answers to your health concerns. Maybe you are struggling with fertility issues, perhaps you are plagued by chronic headaches, or sleep issues, or maybe you wake with aches and pains every morning — whatever your health needs, I want you to know that Chinese medicine has a great deal to offer you. The information in this ebook could very well start you on a journey of healing and self-discovery that will bring your life to a whole new (better) place. By reading this ebook, it is my hope that you will get the following:

- a basic understanding of what Chinese medicine is and what it has to offer you
- a new relationship with your body and a better understanding of how it works
- new tools that you can immediately implement that will start you on your path to total health.

If you have any questions, or would like to immediately begin receiving Chinese medicine treatments, please head to the end of the book to learn more about my clinic, or call 503-442-1205 to set up your free consult.

If you want to know how to take control of your health, start reading to discover the top 5 things you can do right now to start your journey, and how acupuncture can help.



Chapter 1: Pay Attention

Life is so busy these days, isn't it? If you are like me, you've caught yourself eating on the run, talking on the phone while driving (hands-free of course!), returning emails while watching tv, and texting while you walk across the street. You are really good at paying attention to status updates, news bites and your work emails, but what about paying attention to your health? Can you remember the last time you got a headache and paused to see what might be triggering it before popping an ibuprofen in your mouth? Are you waking up at 2:30 every night and cursing your hamster brain without really considering what this constant waking might be trying to tell you?

Committing to Your Health

Your health is far more important than that work email, far more important than the pic of your friend's sister's dog playing piano, and certainly far more important than catching up on *The Bachelor* (I suppose this last one is a judgement call), but how much time do you give it in your busy week?



Learning to pay attention to your body and to the messages it is sending you is a crucial first step in taking control of your health. I know this is easier said than done. I have a to do list that constantly contains at least 10 different things (and that does not include the things from yesterday's list that did not get done). I have two kids, a business, a husband, friends that rely on me, and once in a while I try to sneak in a shower and some sleep. So stopping, getting quiet, and paying attention to my body is something I have to make time for. It can feel really overwhelming to have to carve out yet more time, for one more 'to do.' Once you get into the habit of it, it paying attention to your body doesn't really require any extra time. You will learn to act when you see subtle changes instead of just when there are big glaring health problems that take time to fix. In fact, developing this habit will save you lots of time down the road because it in this one act you become aware of most of the keys you need to get and stay healthy in mind, body and spirit.

Your body contains a vast and advanced communication network that includes nerves, muscles, hormones, blood vessels and more. Every single part has a job to do, and when one of them gets out of balance, they can all start to fall out of sync. It is really quite magical and incredible that your body is able to function at all with the stressors it is put under every day: the chemicals in the air, on your skin (in the form of makeup and body washes, lotions, etc), and in

your food; the lack of real quality rest; the unchecked levels of stress you allow yourself to be under everyday, from rush hour to staying in a job/relationship/city you hate; eating foods that are fast (and sometimes delicious), but not at all nutritious; isolating yourself behind computers and cell phones in office buildings and cars instead of walking amongst others and having friendly conversations; the pharmaceutical and over-the-counter medications that you take because a) you need to, or b) you don't want to have to do the work that would be required to not need to. I'm sure you can add your own stressors to that list. Yes, they may cause your health to take a hit, but it usually happens slowly, with plenty of time to get back on track if you just learn to listen to the warning signs.

This is why I say you need to "pay attention." If you don't listen, inevitably your health will slowly get worse and worse and the messages your body sends you will get louder and louder until you have no choice but to listen. When you get to this crisis point, there is usually a devastating health event or diagnosis made. If you get to that point you will have a lot more work to do to get back on track. But it is still completely doable. I know. I've been there.

Ignoring the Warning Signs

When I was in graduate school, medical school, learning this very medicine that I now use daily to help others, I had my own run-in with crisis. I was diagnosed with asthma when I was 12. For most of my life since then, it was not too much of an issue. I always had an inhaler with me, and used one preventatively when I would exercise, adding a steroid inhaler to the mix occasionally with a bad illness, but I never needed to be hospitalized.

In grad school, the hours were grueling: between time in class, hours in clinical internship, outside studying hours, and my part-time waitressing job, nearly every single minute of every single day was accounted for. I had *no free time*, nor did I have *enough time to sleep* a reasonable amount. I started getting fairly loud warnings from my body in the fall of my second year. I started getting sick. All the time. Every cold that swung through, I picked up. The colds started to get more severe and to last longer, to the point where the effects from one cold barely ended before the symptoms from the new cold began. I took my herbs, I got acupuncture. I did not get more sleep. I did not do anything to ease my stress levels.

My asthma started getting worse. Each new cold hit my lungs harder and faster. I could no longer breathe well enough to exercise even if I took my inhaler. I felt like *I was falling further behind* my to-do lists, so I only got acupuncture when it was really urgent, and I only took herbs when I really was in dire straits because I *couldn't carve out time* for the appointments. I was not sleeping any extra except when I was so sick that I had no other choice then to take a nap. I was not easing up my stress level at all. I was not going to any western doctors. I was ignoring the messages my body was sending me with ever greater intensity because *I did not have time!* I got sicker. My asthma got so bad that **I had to rest and catch my breath during my 2-block walk to the bus stop!** This should have been enough of a warning. It was not. *No time.*

Finally, right during finals week just after Christmas, the messages from my body reached a fever pitch. I got one more cold, and this time, I ended up having to drive myself to the ER because the breathing treatment and high dose of steroids I had been given at urgent care the day before (I was still furiously studying for finals in the waiting room) had done nothing to improve my breathing. They tested me for the flu. Negative. They did EKGs. All fine. It was just a cold, but by this point, my body was so tired, my immune system so taxed, that I was literally suffocating. I was afraid I would die. They admitted me and I spent two days on IV steroids before being sent home to spend the next 10 days on oral steroids. I missed all of my finals. I had to spend all of our semester break making up tests. Oh, the irony!

Notice all of the italics in the above paragraphs? Those are all messages I was telling myself that were simply not true. They are messages you likely tell yourself: I don't have time. I don't have the money. On and on our excuses go, but really is it true? No. I could have made time for my health, and if I had, I would have saved time in the long-run.

Every day you make choices about what is important to you. You solidify those choices by putting time and money into them. This is your *life*. There is nothing more important than living a happy fulfilled life, and it is really hard to do that if you are not healthy. I waited until I was actually scared I might die to listen to the nearly 6 months of urgent messages my body was giving me. Who knows how many other messages I had gotten before I even noticed all of the colds. I finally had to listen. I started regular acupuncture again. I took herbs every day. I started eating meat after 8 years as a vegetarian (I do not think everyone needs to do this, but I have since discovered that my body does very poorly without meat). I slept. I exercised. I made time for friends. I breathed.

Now what if after, I don't know, cold number 3 in a row, I had stopped and listened? What hardships, not to mention medical costs, could I have avoided if I had said to myself, "Hmmm. Why do I keep getting sick, and how can I stop this?" If I had done that, I would not have ended up in the hospital. I would not have needed to have harsh steroids injected into my veins just to be able to breathe. I could have slept more. I could have made time to take better care of myself. There is always time. It's all about how we choose to use it.

Listen to Your Body

Listen to my story. Don't make your story the same. Listen to the signs your body is giving you. This is what I do with all of my patients: I ask them questions about all the areas of their life: mind, body, emotions, and by asking the questions, you slowly start paying more attention. Are you constipated? Do you wake up in the middle of the night, only to be up for 2-3 hours because you can't get back to sleep? Are you anxious all the



time? Is your hair falling out? Are you having headaches in increasing frequencies? Is your back hurting terribly by the end of the day? Are your periods so painful you have to use narcotics to get through work? Are you eating an increasingly narrow diet because everything you eat seems to cause some sort of digestive problem? All of these are messages that things are not going well. They are each opportunities to stop, pay attention and make a conscious effort to get things on track. Do a mental check of each aspect of your Self: digestion, sleep, pain, reproductive, emotional, lungs, heart...how are you doing? Is there an area that sticks out as being out of balance that you've been ignoring? NOW is the time to start listening.

Are you worried you don't know how to interpret the messages your body is sending you? Are you ignoring messages that you do hear because you are unsure what, if anything, can be done about them? That's ok. You may need to bring in an outside expert. The best doctors do not treat themselves. They bring in an outside objective doctor to give them advice. That is what I provide as an acupuncturist: you bring me your messages, and I interpret them and come up with a treatment plan that consists of things I will do as well as things that you can do to get your health back on track. I give advice on diet and herbal medicinals, I set up an acupuncture schedule, and I make referrals to other health providers when needed. Together we dive into those messages — all of them: big, small, related to sleep, digestion, periods, muscle and body pain...everything — to determine where the problem lies and how it can be fixed. The messages are not masked by medication, they are corrected. We treat them from different angles. You will learn to listen even better; to hear the messages sooner when the problems are subtle and simpler to fix. Week by week things improve. Your health returns. You feel restored. You breathe.

Chapter 2: Baby Your Digestion

I love food. I mean, I really love it. I used to wait tables at a fancy-schmancy seafood restaurant and wine bar, and I learned how to prepare, eat, and drink incredible food and alcohol. I am also a sugar addict, I love a great small-batch bourbon, I will likely never entirely



give up cheese, and don't even get me started on french fries (or chips or mashed potatoes...I could eat them all day every day). I am telling you all of this so that when you read what follows you know that I, too, have to work and be diligent in order to eat in the best way for my body. I am not a sprout-loving, coconut-water-drinking, non-sweet-eating health nut. I am a regular person who loves food who has learned the importance of listening to and taking care of my digestion so that I can feel good.

Eat Real Food

I won't tell you that it is easy, but it *is* simple. Taking care of your body means taking care of your digestion, and doing that means getting back to basics. One of the cornerstones of Chinese medicine is nutrition and the foundation of nutrition is something called the clear, bland diet. Sounds terrible, right? I think it sounds like eating colorless, flavorless gruel. I don't ever want to eat a clear, bland diet — except maybe if I am recovering from food poisoning. I think we lose something in translation, so let's think of it like this: you know all of those exotic, brightly [artificially] colored, pre-packaged, no-cook, fake sugar, preservative containing foods? Stop eating them. That is the first place to start. Eating a clear, bland diet means eating pure food - REAL food- you know, food you could find in the ground, on a tree, from an animal, and eating foods that make your body work well and feel good. If the only thing you do is to replace all your fake processed foods with real food, you will see immense changes in your health. The other thing that goes hand-in-hand with eating real food is eating organic food (see this list of the ["Dirty Dozen and Clean Fifteen"](#) to see which fruits and vegetables should definitely be eaten organic). Pesticides do not enhance food. They are not considered "real." The nutritional value of organic fruits and vegetables has been deemed superior, and this is even more obvious in organic grass-fed meat. The flavor difference is not even close: organic apples make conventional apples seem like plastic fruit. For more information on the benefits of eating organic, follow this [link](#). That sums up **RULE 1: EAT REAL ORGANIC FOOD.**



It is your body's job to try to squeeze out every bit of nutrition it can from what you give it. If you learn the right foods to put into your body, and you do so most of the time, you will feel good. If you give your body potato chips for lunch, it has very little chance of getting any real

nutrients, so you'll get all the calories, but none of the benefits of actually having quality energy to run your body. Here's the thing though, your body will still try really hard to get nutrients from those chips, and this is where it will start to break down. You know the phrase "trying to get blood from a stone?" that is kind of what you are asking your body to do when you feed it food that has no real nutritional value (like most of those sugar-free, fat-free 100 calorie packs and protein bars in your desk drawer). Your body will have to work very hard to get any nutrition at all, and most likely will get a little worn out in the process.

Your digestive system bears a huge responsibility in your overall health. It not only affects obvious things, like constipation, energy, and heartburn, but can also be a big factor in mental health issues, sleep problems, any kind of pain, thyroid function and fertility just to name a few. If you are not getting the right nutrition, your body will not work well. The areas hit the hardest will differ for each of you, and often hit the part of your body that already has some tendency towards weakness. If you are not putting the right foods in your body, you will end up with increasing levels of inflammation, which in turn cause or worsen all of the problems I mentioned above. Although changing your diet is not easy, the way I formulate treatment plans teaches you to look at food in a totally different way. Food becomes not just a tasty thing to put in your mouth, but a way to *address and gain control over your health* needs. And aren't we all just looking for a little bit of control?

Here are a few more keys to babying your digestion:

Eat breakfast.

Eat locally and seasonally.

Eat according to your body, not the latest fad.

Eat mostly cooked food (sorry raw food lovers ... I'll explain).

Eat Breakfast

Let's start at **RULE 2: EAT BREAKFAST.** Are you skipping this meal? Are you drinking two cups of coffee before you put anything substantial in your belly? I commonly have patients tell me that they don't eat breakfast because they are just not hungry when they wake up. Ok. Not a problem. If you need a little time to wake up, to stretch your legs and shake off your sleep before eating, that is fine. The problem is that most of you rush in the morning because



you have somewhere to be, and that somewhere does not allow for the cooking of a really healthy great breakfast.

You end up drinking 2 or 3 (or more!) cups of coffee on an empty stomach, rush to the office, maybe grab a bagel or protein bar for the road, and eat while you are in traffic or at your desk. Or you wait until you are famished at lunch time then scarf down a huge amount of ill-advised calories because you are so hungry you will eat anything. This is the pattern you need to change.

Some of you aren't hungry in the morning because you have completely lost touch with what it even feels like to be hungry. Some of you (maybe many of you) are not hungry because your cortisol-insulin-leptin-melatonin hormones are out of whack. There are certain hormonal patterns that are charged with keeping you asleep when it is dark, and they also keep you from being hungry during those sleeping hours. Many of you have pressed those hormones to the brink, and as such they no longer operate optimally. It could be simply that you are not getting enough sleep, are dragging yourself out of bed in the middle of a sleep cycle, and thus are not hungry because your body still wants to be sleeping.

These are things we can talk about together so we can get your hormone levels back on track. As for breakfast, do try to eat something within the first two hours or so you are awake, and definitely prior to putting any caffeine into your system (if you don't you will only disrupt those hormones further). So what to eat for breakfast? Some of the latest research shows that what you start your day with is what you continue to crave for the rest of the day. As such, it is not ideal to begin your day with a carb-heavy, sugar-heavy, protein-free meal. Soft boiled eggs are a great morning option. In our house, my oldest son and I love to eat dinner leftovers for breakfast, which are most often some combination of protein, vegetables, and perhaps a grain such as quinoa. Think savory. Sure a smoothie is fast, and if you use a really high quality organic grass-fed whey protein powder with some veggies and berries you can get a pretty good meal, but generally smoothies are just sugar bombs. Strive to get protein, a healthy fat, and maybe some veggies or low-glycemic fruit at your first meal. You can eat a grain, too, but try not to make it the focus of your meal. See these recipes for some ideas: [Healthy Start: breakfasts that are delicious and nutritious.](#)

Eat Locally and Seasonally

I hope you found those recipes appealing. I like to eat delicious food, and I want the same for you. Organic. Local. Much of it gluten-free. I make most of our food from scratch. When we restrict our budget, food is the last place we go to find wiggle-room because it is so important that we love our food and that it is high quality. One way to reign in a high food budget is to make sure that you follow **RULE 3: EAT LOCALLY AND SEASONALLY**. First of all, if you eat seasonally, the food you get will not only be more cost-effective, but it will taste better.

Remember the last tomato you got at the grocery store in the winter? That orange-ish mealy, mushy, flavorless tomato? It is not the same as that warm, juicy, deep red, sweet, bursting with flavor tomato you had last August. The nutrient value of the seasonal tomato is higher, and it is less likely to tax your body. Our bodies are rhythmic and ideally should be in touch with natural cycles. For example, during winter our bodies are more inactive and focused on staying warm. Seasonal vegetables like turnips, potatoes and beets are warming and help to insulate our bodies from the



cold. During the summer our bodies are more active and must focus on staying cool from the heat. Most seasonal vegetables and fruit available during summer are cooling and easily digested which allows our bodies to shed the pounds it put on during the colder seasons. Which meals tend to be the heaviest and lightest at what season? Nature provides foods that correspond to the seasons and best support our bodies during particular times of the year.

Don't Follow the Fads (without reason)

The first three rules are mostly what you need to follow to eat a healthy "clear, bland" diet. But each of you are different. Generally, everyone should eat locally, seasonally, organically, and should stick to a low-gluten, low-dairy, low-sugar diet made up of whole foods. But here's the thing about food and your body: you are all unique in your tastes and you are all unique in your digestion. That is why following the latest diet trends, like Paleo, for example, would not be the right suggestion for everyone. Side note: here is a great article about what real paleo eating is if you are so inclined: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-katz-md/paleo-diet_b_889349.html What if you are sensitive to coconut and you jump on the paleo bandwagon? You will actually be harming your body and increasing your inflammation. It is key to find out exactly what foods work for and against *your* digestion. This is **RULE 4: EAT ACCORDING TO YOUR BODY, NOT THE LATEST FAD.**

How do you discover what nuances your body has in regards to digestion? I do this with my patients by asking lots of questions and by having them fill out food/mood/poop journals. Yes, you read that correctly: food/mood/poop journals help you track the foods you eat and how your body feels physically and emotionally, and what kind of digestive experiences you are having. This allows you to start to put together patterns that are going on in your body/mind/gut. You know that 3 pm crash you keep having? Start paying attention to what you eat at lunch, and you will likely find a clue to your crash.

The tricky thing is that beyond the obvious (fried foods, too much sugar, too many refined flours, too many preservative-laden packaged foods), there are a lot of other foods that can tax *your* body. I say "*your*" because this is the part that is truly individual. This is why going gluten-free, or Paleo, or eating an anti-inflammatory diet, etc etc etc is not always the only answer. Take me for instance. Kale and lentils are two almost universally praised high nutrient must-eat foods, and yet they wreak havoc with my digestion. There is a certain restaurant in town that actually serves an amazing, tummy-warming kale and lentil soup, and sometimes I am so entranced by its flavor that I eat it on a cold rainy day. Within 30 minutes I will feel sleepy like I took a Benadryl. Not too long after that I will start to have terrible stomach pains. I cannot eat kale and lentils (unless I want to feel terrible). But once-in-a-while, I say it is worth it knowing full well what the outcome will be, and it is. So even though I almost never eat the foods that hurt me, because I have discovered what foods those are and what outcomes they cause, I actually get to choose whether or not they are worth eating at any given time. Tomatoes make my nasal allergies crazy for about a day. At the peak of heirloom tomato

season, sometimes I feel like eating the tomato and taking a Benedryl is worth it. Most of the time it is not.

Why Does it Matter?

The truth is that your digestion impacts your body in innumerable ways. It has a hand in blood sugar regulation, energy, melatonin production and serotonin levels just to name a few. In Chinese medicine we talk about the qi of your food—its vital energy. Picture if you will a Big Mac meal with fries and a coke. Then picture a hamburger made from scratch, with love, using grass-fed hormone free beef, onions, spices. You place it on a fresh bun, dress it up with some avocado, a fresh slice of tomato and lettuce from your garden. On the side, you serve it with oven roasted sweet potato “fries” to be dipped in a homemade aioli. You drink it down with some good old Bull Run tap water with a slice of lemon. Which food has better energy? Better nutrition? It is easy to see how much harder your body will have to work to get the nutrition out of the fast food meal, and how much less overall nutrition it will get. That homemade meal isn't even full of sacrifice, rather it is just made with high quality real food.

This is why I said you need to baby your digestion. If you don't, you could end up with a whole host of health problems. With every food or beverage you put in your mouth all day long, you get to choose directly how you want to impact your health. It can feel restrictive at times to be someone who doesn't eat sugar, or to be someone who avoids dairy, but if the health benefits offset this restriction, then it is totally worth it.

Chapter Three: Learn How to Sleep



Sleep is such a crazy thing, isn't it? When you are a kid you spend a great deal of time attempting to barter or sneak your way out of sleep, and when you are an adult, you do the opposite. How many times have you awoken in the last couple of weeks and had the first thought out of your head be something along the lines of, "Ugh. Is it morning already?" When my 4-year-old wakes up, his eyes pop open and literally within 2 minutes he is at full capacity ready to go go go. I, meanwhile, sometimes start my day counting how many hours it might be before I get to go back to bed. You can tell a lot about your overall health by paying attention to your sleep patterns.

Insomnia

Many people are suffering from either full-fledged or low-grade insomnia. Are you one of them? According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, 30% of adults complain of suffering from insomnia, which can include: having difficulty falling asleep, having trouble staying asleep, waking early in the morning and being unable to fall back to sleep, or having a poor quality of sleep so that you are never rested in the morning. Does one of these categories describe you?

The Importance of Sleep

There are an unlimited number of things you can do with your days, and having long since said goodbye to the need to follow the natural rhythm of daylight with the invention of electricity, you can easily come up with tasks that keep you from getting enough sleep. Working long hours, taking care of kids, watching movies, spending time on facebook, doing housework (ha!), the list can go on; all of these things can easily end up with you losing sleep, thus robbing your body of precious recovery time. Sleep is the time during the day that your body gets to repair and to process the day's events. According to Harvard University, "many of the major restorative functions in the body like muscle growth, tissue repair, protein synthesis, and growth hormone release occur mostly, or in some cases only, during sleep." According to the same

website, "animal and human studies suggest that the quantity and quality of sleep have a profound impact on learning and memory."

Getting Better Sleep

You all have a natural rhythm of your own, but for most of you it is actually best if you are in bed around 10:00 pm and if you wake around 6:00 am. Oh, how you push those boundaries! And rightly so. How do you fit in your workouts, your emails, work projects, the latest episode of *The Good Wife*, and some sort of social life if you stick to those parameters? I would suggest that at the core, one of the issues is that you are attempting to do too much. If you are having problems going to sleep, it could be that you are trying to squeeze so much into your waking hours that you are not giving yourself any wind-down before heading to bed.

Does this sound familiar? Are you pounding out that last work email while the tv is on in the background when you finally shut it all down because *argh! it's already 11:30?! How did it get so late?* You have an early meeting, so you jump up, shut off the lights, brush your teeth and go to bed. Then you lie there. You realize you forgot to wash the laundry that had your work outfit in it for tomorrow. Oh, and you told your boss/friend/mother that you'd email them that recipe for the dinner party they're throwing this weekend. You'll have to do that first thing when you wake up. And speaking of dinner, you never got around to grocery shopping this weekend, so what are you going to make for dinner tomorrow? Do you have any chicken in the freezer? Hmm... Oh, and on the news they said it will get below freezing tonight, so you have to make it out the door 5 minutes early so you can scrape your windows. Ok, sleep. Stop thinking. Ugh! You forgot to turn the heat off. Oh well, since you're up, you might as well send that recipe now. And on and on...

Limit Screen Time

I hear from patients all the time that they just can't shut off their brains at the end of the day, so it can take an hour or two to fall asleep. If you keep replaying the events of the day, or your to-dos for tomorrow, you have an issue. The first thing to do is to **limit screen time before bed**.

Give yourself at least 30 minutes of screen-free time before trying to go to sleep. The blue light emitted from computers and tvs and iphones and kindles, etc, interferes with your production of melatonin, which makes it much more difficult to fall asleep. Essentially, it tricks your brain into thinking it is daytime, so it does not wind down, it amps up. If you must be on a computer late into the night (if it is the only time you have to get work done), then there is free software you can download that minimizes that amount of blue light that your screen emits. You can find it here: <http://justgetflux.com>



Slow Down

It is also really important to **remind your brain to slow down**. If you are balancing your checkbook right before bed or attending to a stressful work situation, how do you expect that to suddenly stop being your brain's focal point? For some people it is enough to just put a notepad near their bed so that they can write down any of those pesky to-dos or reminders so that they can get them out of their heads. Others of you may have to start rituals, like reading a book, meditating, or even just having relaxing conversation with your partner so that you get your brain in a slower state prior to attempting to sleep. The last thoughts that come into your brain before sleep should be pleasant ones, and it can sometimes be enough to think of all of the things for which you are grateful as you shut your eyes.

Get to the Root

For others of you, it is not the falling asleep that you have an issue with, but the staying asleep that causes problems. Sleep should be something you look forward to, and yet for some of you the thought of going to bed is even worse than the thought that it is time to get up. For those of you that fit this picture, not winding down properly before bed can still be a culprit, but there also may be other issues at play. More often than not when I have a patient come into see me who is waking up during the night, they wake at nearly the same time every night — and it is almost always somewhere between 1:00 and 3:00 am. According to Chinese medicine, this time is governed by the Liver, one of the key players in stress management. It is common that if you trace back to the beginning of your sleep issues, there is some sort of stressful event that preceded your night wakings. It could be a job change, a move, a marriage or divorce, a change in economics, but whatever it is, it is something that has left its imprint on your sleep. If you can **trace your sleep issues back to when they began** - to an event such as I mentioned - it is worth while to explore any unresolved emotions or stress around that event. If you can do so, you may find that sleeping is no longer an issue.

If there is no event that sticks out to you, it could just be general stress that is bogging you down so that when you wake due to a drop in blood sugar or so that you can go to the bathroom, your mind starts racing and you are unable to get back to sleep for several hours, if at all. If this is the case, it is a good idea to follow the same recommendations that I made above, but it would also be worth it to see a health provider to get some feedback about possible cortisol or blood sugar issues. If a patient is subject to night waking, and it does not resolve quickly with acupuncture and a little stress management, I often want to dig into their hormone levels to see if that is one of the impediments to a restful night of sleep. Your hormones work intricately together and if one of them is off, it can easily affect others. For instance, the decrease in estrogen during menopause can cause an inverse relationship to melatonin, and can also cause a problem with your pituitary which can lead to insomnia and night sweats. Sound familiar? These issues often respond very well to Chinese medicine, but would not likely be something you would decipher on your own.

Chapter 4: Move Your Body

I have more than one patient who swears “*As long as I exercise: I can sleep/my digestion is good/my headaches are better/my body doesn’t ache/I have plenty of energy/my anxiety is manageable.*” Your body was not built to sit at a desk all day. If it were, you wouldn’t have shoulders so tight that they feel like rocks, a low back ache that feels better if you get up and stretch regularly, carpal tunnel, and tension headaches every afternoon. People spend so much time these days sitting and so little time purposefully moving their bodies that overall health is greatly declining. There have been numerous studies now linking sedentary jobs to lower life expectancy. You can also suffer in the mental health department if you spend too much time sitting, as activating the endorphins that come from exercise can offset a lot of stress. In addition to improving mood, benefitting cardiovascular systems and improving/managing weight, exercise also helps sharpen the brain, is protective against at least several different kinds of cancer, helps with sleep, and may protect against Alzheimer’s. All of that *and* you will have a better body image.



I like to feel strong and capable. I like being able to take someone up on an invitation to hike up Dog Mountain without having to worry that I’ll slow them down. I do not love working out. I do not get a runner’s high, nor do I feel any kind of endorphins at the end of a workout. I feel hungry, tired and sweaty. But at the same time I feel invigorated, I am much more in love with

my body, I feel like I just accomplished something worthwhile. How do you feel after a workout?

The Recommendations

I know that the recommendations are daunting. Current guidelines for adults ages 18-64 from the CDC now state that at the bare minimum you should be getting 30 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity 5 days/week and muscles strengthening that addresses all major muscle groups at least 2 times/week. That is just the minimum. For real benefits, you should strive for double that. Who has the time?

The Reality

I know how hard it is to squeeze time for regular exercise into an already packed schedule. Another thing for the to do list. For some of you it would be as simple as going to bed a bit earlier and getting up earlier to get in your workout. If you are like me, with little ones who still keep you from getting anywhere near enough sleep, this is not an option. Still, most of you will find that there are other things that can be compromised if you are truly honest about the way you spend your time. I'll use myself as an example: I am really good at wasting time online. It is classic avoidance! I also know, however, how much better I feel when I am in shape than when I am not. By far my favorite way to exercise is to take yoga and barre classes, but with two small children and a husband that has to leave for work just after 6 in the morning, there is very little opportunity for me to get to a class. Also, they can be really expensive. I do not especially enjoy running, but it is one of the exercises that I can do with my youngest son along in the stroller while my older son rides his scooter. I also have a few exercise tapes that I do during naptime here and there, and we try to build lots of activity into our play. I just sneak it in whenever I can. 20 minutes here, 40 minutes there...

Your New View of Exercise

Maybe, like me, you just need to look at exercise in a new way. The the CDC also notes that it is just as beneficial to get your cardio in 10-minute chunks as it is to do it all at once. Guess what that means? Mowing the lawn counts as moderate aerobic activity! 2 1/2 hours per week may sound impossible, but part of that is because you think of exercise as *this thing* that involves going to the gym, getting super sweaty and



breathless, working to the point of exhaustion. I know there have been many times I could have fit in 10-20 minutes of moderate exercise just walking the hills by my house or walking to the grocery store for the toilet paper instead of driving, but I didn't think of it as "real exercise." I thought if I didn't change into my workout gear, go to the gym, work hard for

60-90 minutes, come home and shower — all taking a grand total of at least 2 hours out of my day — it really didn't count. If you break your exercise into smaller chunks and begin to integrate it into your life instead of thinking of it as something separate, I think you'll see how you can make it work. Below is a sample list:

- If you find yourself with an extra 20 minutes before you have to start dinner, go for a quick jog, or jump some rope.
- Think about errands you could run (literally!) on foot or by bike instead of in the car.
- Here in Portland, we are a city of bike commuters...is this a possibility for you? You may find you enjoy it a whole lot more than sitting in traffic in your car.
- Can you go to bed 45 minutes earlier each night, giving up some facebook or tv time, so that you can workout before work?
- If you don't want to give up your favorite shows, how about jumping rope or walking on a treadmill while watching them?
- Spend 10 minutes playing soccer or tag with your kids.

If you really take a look at your life, you will likely find a way to carve out the time for regular exercise, and after just a few weeks, you will be so glad you did.

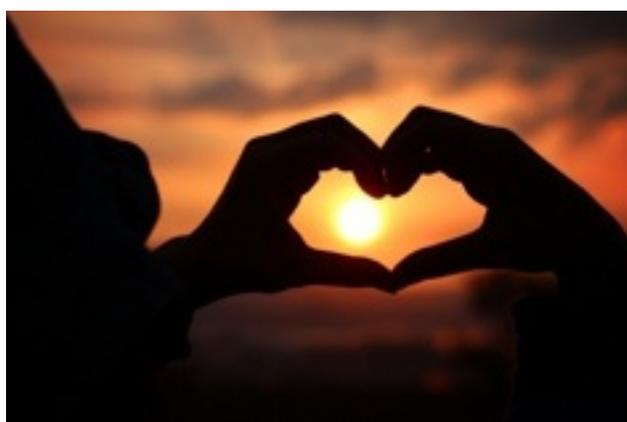
Chapter 5: Embrace Yourself

The first 4 keys to good health that you read about were strongly rooted in the physical realm: listen to your body, eat well, sleep, exercise. We spend so much time in our heads in our modern world that we are increasingly disconnected from our bodies, and those 4 keys to health address that problem. This is what I wanted you to learn in the first part of this ebook: how to reconnect your mind with your body. This is crucial for you to be healthy and to live a healthy life.

Fulfillment

To go beyond this foundation, to live a truly fulfilling and complete life, you also need to know who you are, what makes you happy, what you want out of life, and then you need to embrace it. Live it. This is the tricky part. This can take a little bit of time. Some meditation and some thought are likely going to be necessary for you to figure this out, and it will be a lifelong evolution.

Some of you may be so disconnected from this idea that you don't really even understand what I am getting at here. Or you may be rolling your eyes, thinking, "ok, now she's getting too new-agey on me." If this makes you uncomfortable or if you find yourself reacting negatively to this section, please just give it a few minutes of your time. Maybe this is not for you. Maybe this is not for you *right now*. Maybe you will discover that this is what you have always needed, but you never knew it. You were drawn to my website for a reason, and you have read this far into the ebook for a reason. You are looking for guidance, so just give into the possibility that this could also be part of your healing journey.



Who Are You?

Are you still with me? Let me explain a little more about what I mean when I say you need to "know who you are." Knowing who you are means that you understand why you are here in this Life as "you" and what you have to learn and what you have to share with others. You could call it your purpose. Some people think of this purely in the realm of spirituality or religion, but I think it can simply mean finding the path that makes you feel happy and fulfilled and then *choosing*

that path at every turn. It means that you are aware of and play to your strengths and your weaknesses. It means that you are present in your daily life. It means that when you get off course, you don't stray too far before correcting. You pay attention. Yes you have to earn a

living, you have obligations, you likely cannot just take off permanently for the South Pacific. But you likely do not have to spend your life in drudgery, constantly feeling worn down and unhappy, or like your soul is being sucked out of you.

So how do you do this? I'm not talking about magic here, or *The Secret*. Sure affirmations are great, and most of us could use some positive Self-talk, but what good is an affirmation if you don't put any action behind it? Many of you spend your days in a state of suspension. You ignore your pain, both physically and emotionally, and you put your head down and just make it through. After all, tomorrow is another day, right? But I don't want to spend my life waiting for the time things will be better...I want to enjoy today AND tomorrow, and I want that for you, too. "Life is a journey, not a destination." Cheesy, but true.

I'm sure there are bright spots in your days, but do you have the feeling that there could be a lot more of them? Do you feel like your life isn't quite the way you thought it would be? Do you feel like most of your days blur into one? You may be where you are in life because so much momentum built up behind you that you were just kind of thrust into the life you have without having stopped much to make purposeful choices about it. Did you get a job as an analyst when you were desperate for a job and now you are feeling stuck there? As long as that has led you to a place where you want to be, that is ok. It is great! If you have anything less than happiness and fulfillment though, here is your opportunity to slow things down, pay attention and maybe to make some different choices. This is your chance to course correct.

Meditation

So how to do it? Getting to know yourself is a lifelong process, and one that changes along the way. In my years in practice I have noticed that acupuncture is a wonderful tool for not only helping people deeply reconnect their minds with their bodies, but people also see a shift in perspective. Sometimes the shift is subtle, other times profound, but either way it is there. Stress is easier to manage, little things bother you less, and you begin to see things in a new way. There are many things that I offer my patients to guide them further in this process if they so choose, and many are too involved to offer in this e-book. However, I think that the first and most important step is to begin a meditation practice.



I realize that the idea of meditation is daunting if you already feel like you don't have enough time in your life. Likely, too, you have had some experience with meditation and have found that it feels more like torture to sit still for so long. If you truly cannot imagine being still and quiet for even 5 minutes and you live in Portland, you can contact me and we can arrange private Qigong lessons (Qigong is a form of movement based meditation). [Click here to find out more about it.](#) Here is the truth, though: you can do it. I am one of the least quiet, least still people I know and my brain is always thinking at least 3-7 thoughts at any given time.

From the time that I was a small child, my multi-tasking brain and the ensuing disruption it brought to my classmates was my most common critique from teachers. If I have learned to meditate, so can you.

I'm Serious...Meditate

Of course it will take a little practice and a little time, but here's the good news: it takes very little time to start feeling the benefits of a meditation practice. You may even feel the benefits after the first session. Here are some of the things I have noticed from my own meditation practice: I am much more patient. This has been especially useful in my parenting. I am rarely anxious anymore. I sleep better. I am more focused in my work. I am slowly seeing the whole picture of what I want my life to look like. I am more motivated. I have noticed many blocks clearing that I felt had been holding me back in my career. I am less afraid of making mistakes. Overall, my quality of life is greatly improved by meditation.



Many people who teach meditation will tell you that you need to meditate at least 20-30 minutes daily. Yikes! I have two small kids who wake me up waaaaay too early in the morning, and a busy job and then family duties when I get home. By the time the kids go to bed, most attempts to try to meditate end with me falling asleep. So how to fit it in? Well, if it is a possibility, it is best to meditate for 20 minutes or more daily, and to do it first thing in the morning each day. This way you don't push it aside as the to-do list piles up (and likely it will help you tackle that to-do list much more efficiently). I say, shoot for 5 minutes a day. It is a starting point, and it is easy to find 5 minutes to sit uninterrupted and quiet your mind. What will likely happen is that some days 5 minutes will feel like torture and you will be ecstatic to hear your cell phone timer ring, and other days you will get into it and will just keep going. Eventually the sessions will increase in duration because it feels good, and you will work your way up to a regular practice.

Before You Begin

Before beginning, it can be helpful to consider a few things that will be a part of your meditation so you can set yourself up for success:

1. When can you meditate? Where are you free to do this? Setting regular times/places is the easiest way to begin and maintain a practice, but it may be helpful for you to consider all of the options you have throughout your day for a few minutes of mindfulness.

2. Choose your focus. Many people focus on their breath as a kind of home base during meditation. It is the place to which you can always bring your mind back when you lose focus on entering thoughts or interruptions. Some people choose a color on which to focus, or a mantra, or an energy center on the body. What you choose is up to you. If you find yourself thinking about your grocery list or your back pain or any number of other things during meditation, just gently bring your mind back to your chosen point of focus. Each time you bring your mind back you get better at the art of meditation, so instead of getting aggravated for 'breaking concentration,' remember that this is part of growing in your practice.

3. Sometimes negative thoughts, emotions, or experiences will come up during meditation. If this is the case, you can feel free to use this contemplative time to explore these, and to heal them. Instead of pushing away a negative thought or feeling, allow yourself to fully embrace the emotion attached to it. Ask yourself for the greater lesson or the greater message that you are being given through this emotion. Then, realize that you do not have to identify with or attach yourself to this negative feeling. It is a part of you, but it need not define you. Thank it for the lesson it has bestowed, and ask it to leave. Be gentle with yourself during these times, and seek outside guidance if needed.

Beginning Your Meditation Practice (it's easy!)

Now that you have thought about these three things, you are ready to begin. Here's how:

Step One: Set your posture. Sit in a quiet space where you will not be interrupted. Sit either cross-legged on the floor or a cushion, or in a straight-backed chair. Gently close your eyes, and hold your body upright like a string attached to the top of your head is gently elongating your spine. It can be helpful to also imagine a very light weight pulling downward on your tailbone, rooting you into the chair or ground. It is ideal to sit without your back leaning against anything because you want to be in a state of alertness, but if this causes pain you can rest against something.

Step Two: Check in with your body. Take a few breaths deep into your belly while you find your comfortable position. Now take a few more breaths to check in with your body. Feel your muscles. Make sure that you are not holding any unnecessary tension in your face or your shoulders. If you are, focus your breath into the area of the tension, and imagine the tension melting as you exhale. Hold your back erect, but not to the point of strain. Check that your hips, your legs and your feet create a strong base, but are relaxed. Rest your hands gently in your lap.

Step Three: Set your intention for your practice. By 'intention' I mean to focus on why you are choosing to meditate, not what you are hoping to get out of it. This is a subtle, yet important distinction.

Step Four: Find your breath. When you breathe, breathe deeply — not big intense breaths, but breaths that reach deeply into your belly. For some of you this is what you will choose to focus on during your meditation...breathing. You can place one hand on your chest and one on your upper abdomen so you can ensure that your breath is making your belly gently rise and fall while your chest remains almost motionless. Place your hands back in your lap gently. Take several breaths at your own pace, and feel yourself get deeper into relaxation.

Begin.

Chapter 6: How Chinese Medicine Can Help

Hopefully after reading the first 5 chapters, you feel like you have a few tools that you can begin using to take charge of your health. Now I'd like to give you a few more details about how Chinese Medicine can help on this journey.

Holistic Defined

One of the best things about this medicine is that it is holistic. This means that instead of going to the allergist for your allergies, the back specialist for your back pain, and your primary care doctor for your sinus infection, you can come see an acupuncturist and have all of the issues addressed at once. We believe that the body, mind and spirit work together as a whole entity, and as such you cannot address one part of it without addressing the others. For instance, as we discussed earlier, sleep is a time for restoration and healing so if you are suffering from anxiety but you also have insomnia, it is imperative that we get you sleeping instead of just addressing the anxiety. If your primary concern is your chronic headaches, but you also have IBS, we will address both of those concerns as a part of your treatment plan. The goal in holistic medicine is to get your whole health picture up to optimum levels, not just to suppress symptoms, and not just to get by. We want you to be the best YOU you can be.

Ok, so the medicine is 'holistic,' but what tools are used as a part of treatment? The main tools of Chinese Medicine are these: acupuncture, herbs, diet and exercise. When you come to your initial appointment, you will be going over an entire and complete health history with your provider. You will discuss digestion, sleep, aches and pains, your hobbies, your stress level, and much more. After asking all the questions deemed necessary at the time, your acupuncturist will make an initial diagnosis and will perform acupuncture based on that diagnosis. You will then be given a treatment plan that indicates what other types of treatment may be helpful for your condition.

Acupuncture

You likely know that acupuncture involves the insertion of tiny needles at various points on the body known as 'acupuncture points.' Needles?! This simple word keeps a lot of people from pursuing acupuncture as a treatment, not just because of needle-phobia, but also because it is difficult to wrap your head around the idea that needles could make you feel *better*.

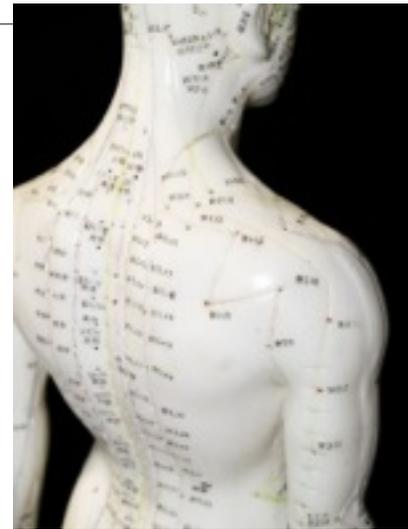
First of all, the needles are tiny. Teeny tiny, like a thick piece of hair. When I put the first acupuncture needle in a new patient and ask them what they think, by far the most common response is "I didn't even feel it!" In fact, acupuncture is so relaxing that it is quite common for people to fall asleep during their treatments.

So if you don't even feel the needles, then how can it possibly help? Well, the basic principles of Chinese medicine are based on the concept of Qi, which translates loosely into "energy" or "life-force." This may be hard for you to entertain, but it is similar to many of the ideas in

quantum physics — the idea that instead of a solid mass, we are actually made up of pure energy. Of course we take into account the biological functions of your organs and your muscles, bones and tissues, and Chinese medicine is adept at treating these, but we simultaneously address this subtler and deeper part of you in order to heal the root of your health issues. So if you have chronic back pain, an acupuncturist will treat the muscles and may give you exercises and stretches to do in order to strengthen and support the area, but we will also address any imbalances with your Qi that may have given you a tendency to back problems in the first place. This way, we are able to relieve symptoms and to heal the root of the problem so that ultimately, you heal in a more complete way.

How Does it Work?

As I mentioned before, acupuncturists use tiny surgical-grade, sterile needles to treat both physical issues, such as muscle tightness, and to access your Qi. There are over 365 acupuncture points that lie on 12 main meridians all over the body. We insert needles at specific acupuncture points based on your diagnosis in order to bring balance to your body. Inserting the needles is kind of a way to give suggestions and reminders to your body thereby activating its innate ability to heal itself.



Let me give you a case study to make this a little easier to understand:

Patient X started getting headaches regularly about 3 years ago. She slowly started taking more and more ibuprofen, and as a result developed stomach issues. Her doctor suggested she go see a neurologist to find out why the headaches are happening, and in the meantime gave her a prescription to try to help the headaches without further damaging her stomach. When she came in for treatment, I went over her health history and discovered that around the time that her headaches began, she not only started a new stressful job, but she also lost her mother with whom she was very close.

At a very basic level, her body had begun responding to stressful stimulus by having headaches. Some of the acupuncture points I used during treatment addressed all of the tight neck and shoulder muscles that she was chronically tensing. I also needed to choose acupuncture points that would keep her from reflexively tightening those muscles and bunching up her energy in response to stress. In this way, I treated both the symptoms (the tight muscles and the pain of the headache), as well as the subconscious reflexes that were leading to the tight muscles and headaches in the first place. Acupuncture gives us a way to access your body's energy in order to retrain your body to respond in a healthy way to outside stressors (be they physical, mental or emotional) instead of in a negative way. It is entirely

possible to have a busy high-demand job without having headaches, and with acupuncture we teach your body how to accomplish that.

Supporting Therapies

Chinese medicine, while best known in this country for acupuncture, is actually comprise of 4 foundations: Acupuncture, Herbal Medicine, Nutrition, Exercise/Meditation. In this section I will walk you briefly through each of the remaining three categories so that you will know what to expect as a possible part of a treatment plan when you come in for care.



Herbs

In addition to acupuncture, a well-trained acupuncturist will also be comfortable using herbs to treat your health conditions. Chinese medicinals are an incredibly effective way to manage and treat a host of conditions, including but not limited to:

- painful periods
- thyroid issues, such as Hashimoto's
- PCOS
- sprains/strains/breaks
- infertility
- chronic headaches and migraines
- IBS/weak digestion
- colds and flus
- phlegmy cough
- adrenal support
- night sweats

They can be custom-made to minimize side effects, but also come in patent, or pill, form. Herbs are our form of internal medicine, and even though they are all natural, do not think that this means they are not strong. They should be prescribed by a practitioner of Chinese medicine who knows about your health concerns and your health history, as well as any pharmaceuticals or OTC medicines you are taking.

Nutrition

Chapter 2 covered many aspects of what I talk about with patients during the course of their treatment. I would like to let you know about a few other important ways in which nutrition can be used as a part of treatment in Chinese Medicine.

Inflammation is the root of many (if not all) diseases; from arthritis to Hashimotos to IBS and migraines, what you eat can make a huge difference on the overall levels of inflammation in your body. While what you eat may not be the *cause* of your illness, what you eat can greatly impact it. Let me explain it with a case study:

78 year-old “Julie*” came to my office complaining of shoulder pain due to osteoarthritis. She had tried medication, physical therapy and cortisone injections with little to no help. Her doctor said that the only option left was surgery, but Julie did not want to take that step so she decided to try acupuncture. While acupuncture and herbs were a big part of her treatment plan, so was making changes to her diet.

Julie’s arthritis was always worse in the winter when the weather is cold and damp. Her shoulder would get swollen and increasingly stiff and achey — all signs of inflammation. Well, Julie can’t control the weather, and short of spending winters in Arizona, we had to find a way to accommodate for the worsening of her pain with cold, damp weather. Your body is a complete whole, so even though her shoulder was the manifestation of her most acute and bothersome inflammation, her body was full of inflammation, as are all of yours. You need to focus on the inflammation you can control.

When you eat foods that are difficult for you to digest, foods that make you tired, or grumpy, or give you gas or indigestion, you are increasing the overall levels of inflammation in your body. Julie was sensitive to gluten. It gave her diarrhea, gas and bloating — all also signs of inflammation, and though she noticed no correlation to eating gluten and worse shoulder pain in the summer, in the winter it was a different matter. When Julie was already dealing with increased inflammatory responses due to the cold and damp and *then* she ate gluten, her shoulder pain would spike for a day. Julie does not have celiac’s disease. She is not *allergic* to gluten, but because she does not digest it well it increases the overall levels of inflammation in her body. Because her shoulder was already the most inflamed part of her body, eating gluten in the winter made Julie’s shoulder pain worse.



In another example, I’ll use myself. I have had terrible grass allergies since I was a child. I also have learned in my adult life that I am sensitive to tomatoes. In the summer, during the peak of the grass pollen season, I cannot control the levels of grass pollen in the air, therefore, my body is constantly in a heightened state of inflammation. Because eating tomatoes also causes inflammation in my body, if I were to eat tomatoes for dinner during grass pollen

season, I know that I will wake up around 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning with a ferociously itchy throat, runny nose, sneezing and itchy eyes. If I avoid tomatoes and am not actually rolling around in grass or mowing the lawn, I have very few issues with my allergies.

Everyone's levels of inflammation are different, and everyone has different foods that increase their inflammation. There are no one-size-fits-all food plans here. Part of what I offer for patients who want nutrition support is to guide them through the process of deciphering which foods might be triggering their health issues and what they can do about it. I then help patients make the changes they need to, which is not always easy. I help come up with recipes and meal plans, and I offer programs to help make changes to your diet whether they be big overhauls or little tweaks. I know how difficult it is to change eating habits, so if you come to my office, you will not have to do it alone. You will, however, gain control over your health, and that is priceless.

Exercise/Meditation

In Chapter 5 I alluded to a practice called Qigong. In Chinese Medicine practice, we consider Qigong both a form of exercise and a form of meditation. This is an important component of treatment because so many of our health issues are hugely complicated by unchecked stress. I teach a form of Qigong called One Thousand Hands Buddha. This is a description of the seated meditation from the Ling Gui school [website](#):

This is a superior, spiritual healing Qigong method, inspired by the symbolical positioning of Buddha's fingers, referred to as "mudras" by Buddhists. It is an approach producing calmness and which inhibits the heart from "galloping away," thus leading the practitioner into a state of silence and peace a little at a time. The interest of this Qigong method is fourfold: it removes suffering, fortifies energy, calms the heart and helps the spirit attain wisdom. The method also helps fight stress and maintain the memory.

Meditation can offer a host of benefits well beyond the stress-relief and self-awareness that might seem obvious. According to the [Mayo Clinic website](#):

Some research suggests that meditation may help people manage symptoms of conditions such as:

- Anxiety disorders
- Asthma
- Cancer
- Depression
- Heart disease

High blood pressure
Pain
Sleep problems

Mixing together movement and meditation in the form of Qigong can be a simple way to introduce meditation into your life without the pressure of feeling like you have to just sit and be still.

Benefits

Ok, so all of this information about acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, but why should you do it? Let's talk payout.

The benefits of acupuncture are many, and I could go on for days about the wonderful way that acupuncture will help. Regardless of what issues bring you into the acupuncturist, here are just a few of the fabulous side effects that most people experience:

Pain Relief
Increase in Energy
Better Sleep
Emotional Balance
Management of Chronic Illness
Increased Feeling of Calm

Many people, after getting off the treatment table feel utterly relaxed and peaceful. In addition to getting relief from their health concerns, they often have a great night of sleep, and feel an overall sense of well-being for several days.

Chapter 7: About Solstice Natural Health

At Solstice Natural Health, we primarily practice Traditional Chinese Medicine style acupuncture. That being said, we truly view each person as an individual, and adjust needling techniques and adjunctive therapies not only according to your symptoms, but also according to your needs and your response to treatment. Our goal is to help you reach your health goals in whatever capacity you need. If you need us to create an entire holistic treatment plan for you, including nutrition plans, herbal medicine, aromatherapy, meditation, and more, we will do that. If all you need is occasional acupuncture, we will do that. After meeting with you the first time, we will create a custom treatment plan and together the two of us will decide on the best course of action. This is a collaborative healing environment, with the ultimate goal being that you not only feel better, but that you feel like you now have learned some new tools to better care for yourself.

In addition to the supporting therapies mentioned above, there are also other options for care available to you at Solstice Natural Health, both as adjunctive or primary treatment modalities. Here is a list of those therapies, and a description of what they might look like as stand-alone options:

Qigong

I am a certified Qigong teacher, and as such can do individual or group classes. If you are interested in either one, please [contact me](#) so that you can make arrangements, as both the individual and group sessions are offered by request only.

Aromatherapy

I have received accredited training in medical aromatherapy, and I use essential oils as part of my practice. In my training I learned how to use the power of different oils in order to treat physical, mental and emotional issues in accordance with Chinese medicine principles. I combines aromatherapy with acupuncture sessions on a limited basis, but if you are interested in an aromatherapy driven treatment, I do offer that as well. An aromatherapy session would consist of an in-depth health history, assessment of your condition, and treatment combining essential oils and acupressure. I will then give you a care plan so that you can continue your healing.



Flower Essence Therapy

Introduced to the power of flower essences by a local practitioner friend, I was further excited by them when a veterinarian suggested their use for my cat. Our dear elderly cat had developed grand mal seizures, and our vet suggested using Rescue Remedy (the most famous of the flower essences) on specific acupuncture points as soon as we saw the seizure

beginning. Each time we did so, the seizure would be prevented. That is when I realized that these actually were powerful medicine.

I began studying and now use them in practice mainly as a way to help patients deal with intense or very entrenched emotional blocks. It is a gentle way to help clear and move these blocks that are a part of an underlying problem that may be causing other physical, mental or emotional issues in your life. They can be used for issues ranging from anxiety, grief, and insecurities, to insomnia, and emotional eating (just to name a few). I use them during treatment if applicable, but most commonly create custom blends for patients as an adjunct part of their treatment plan. If you are interested in sessions based only around creating a custom blend, [contact me](#) for further info.

Nutritional Therapy

Nutrition and dietary recommendations are made on an as-needed basis as part of every patient's treatment plan. Without proper eating and proper digestion, it is not possible to reach total wellness. I have spent several years studying functional medicine and integrative nutrition beyond my years in medical school, and as such, I also offer patients the option of having in-depth nutrition plans created as a separate service. This option is offered on its own or as an add-on to your acupuncture care plan, as there is a separate fee for this service.

Custom nutrition plans include more specific recommendations of foods to eat and avoid, information on eating seasonally, recipes, cooking tips, and can be further customized to include grocery store tours. Along with this is included email support so that you do not have to go through making these big changes all on your own. Making changes to your eating habits is daunting, and can be overwhelming, but I am here to offer the support you need so that you can truly commit to and reach your health goals.

About Erin Brockmeyer, LAc



Background

Erin was first drawn to Acupuncture in 2000 when she was seeking treatment for a severe anxiety disorder. She did not want to take medication for it, as she felt that there had to be a way to heal the issue, not just to mask it. In addition to falling in love with the life-changing results of acupuncture on her mental and emotional health, Erin also discovered that treatment had eliminated the almost daily headaches she had been getting for 10 years. She thought that the medicine was magical, and as such had no desire to pursue it as a career.

Education

It wasn't until 2003 that Erin began her studies in Chinese medicine after spending several years out of college in a job she intensely disliked. A friend suggested acupuncture as a career, and she called several schools to request information. After reading through the course catalog from the prestigious Oregon College of Oriental Medicine, she knew she had found her calling. She received her Masters of Science in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine in 2006, is certified by the NCCAOM as a Diplomat in Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine, and is licensed by the Oregon Board of Medical Examiners. She has been in private practice since graduating, and continues to study and research in order to grow in her knowledge.

Specialties

Erin's specialties are women's health, including fertility and prenatal care, the treatment of chronic and acute pain conditions, and the treatment of chronic health conditions like anxiety disorders and autoimmune disorders.

Contact

You can contact Erin Brockmeyer, LAc to inquire about treatment or to book speaking engagements by calling 503-442-1205 or emailing erin@solsticeacupuncture.com. You can also visit her website at www.SolsticeAcupuncture.com in order to read more about specific health conditions or to check out her popular blog. Erin is also the Natural Health writer for GoLocalPDX, and you can read her articles weekly on their website www.GoLocalPDX.com.

Family

Erin currently lives in Portland, Oregon with her arborist husband and their two silly and loving boys. She enjoys a good whisky, making her own medicines, reading, hiking and having great times with great people.