



Points To Ponder

Healing, Health, & Well-being Through Acupuncture



Winter 2007



*With the past, I have nothing to do; nor with the future.
I live now. ~Ralph Waldo Emerson*



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Welcome Winter: Combat the Blues, Aches and Pains

Some people think of the gray or cold days of winter and it brings peace and a sense of stillness, a welcome slower pace after the frenzy of summer. For others, the winter makes them feel sad or depressed, describing their “funk” as the “winter blues.”

Compound this lack of get-up-and-go with cold-related aches and pains, especially for arthritis sufferers, and winter is a season that many dread.

Armed with the proper information about the season and some wellness care, however, winter can be a season of peace and reflection—a season of “down time” that we all need to store energy for the coming spring.

The season of water

There is probably little coincidence to the fact that blue is the color of the season, and water is the season’s dominant element according to Traditional Chinese Medicine. For those who feel sad or fear the unknown during the winter, try an acupuncture treatment specifically to re-balance your water element and realign energy flow to the kidneys and bladder, the officials of the season.

An imbalance in the kidneys or bladder may not only result in symptoms of sadness or fear, but when the kidney Qi is weak, people may experience issues with metabolism (it slows down), urination, fertility, puffiness under the eyes (or dark circles), and sexuality. Because the kidney Qi declines with age, we see more depression and sadness with older people, so pay special attention to the older loved ones in your life (and suggest a treatment for them, too).

When a person is in balance, winter should feel like a welcome period of rest and recuperation in preparation for the coming spring and summer which require huge amounts of energy—just as the little plant stays dormant in the winter to restore energy below the ground’s surface in order to be beautiful and vibrant in the spring.

In addition to seeking an acupuncture treatment to rebalance the energy, you may also notice that treatments reduce aches and pains or discomfort due to arthritis (often exacerbated by the season’s cold). (Be sure to tell me if you have aches and pains, so I can address them, too, in your treatment.) Acupuncture is proven to help reduce inflammation, which in turn reduces pain for many.

Other suggestions to help cope with the winter blues and the seasonal aches and pains, include: regular exercise (keep those muscles and joints moving to avoid stiffness), eating fresh vegetables (antioxidants help the body restore itself and reduce inflammation); take vitamins; and drinking plenty of water (to combat the cold and dryness of the season).

Acupuncture & Arthritis Study

Dr. Stephen E. Straus, director of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, reports, “A clinical trial with sufficient rigor, size (570 patients), and duration has shown that acupuncture reduces the pain and functional impairment of osteoarthritis of the knee.” The study was led by Dr. Brian Berman of the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore.

The patients who participated in the study all had “significant pain,” had not had knee surgery in the past six months, and had not used steroids or similar anti-inflammatory injections. They did continue their western medical care, including pain relievers and anti-inflammatory medicines.

Of the patients who received treatment, 190 received acupuncture, 191 received “sham acupuncture” and 189 followed the self-help course provided by the Arthritis Foundation. In the two treatment groups, a screen was used to conceal the treatment area so people did not know if there were receiving the actual or sham procedure.

Those receiving acupuncture for eight weeks showed a “significant increase in function,” and by week 14, they experienced “a significant decrease in pain” compared to the other two groups. The scientists concluded, **“Those who received acupuncture had a 40 percent decrease in pain and a nearly 40 percent improvement in function.”**

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*Happy Holidays
& Best Wishes
for a Healthy,
Happy New Year!*

Twin Peaks Mountain,
Colorado 2007

MENOPAUSE: A CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE

Our western culture has been quite successful at convincing us all that menopause is a dreaded phase of life, like a sickness. Those who study alternative medicine, however, suggest a different perspective. In an article by Dianne M. Connelley, M. Ac., she suggests that menopause be seen as a “phenomenon” that gives women the unparalleled experience of being in touch with their bodies.

Rather than fighting the tiredness or sleeplessness, she suggests that women see the tiredness as their bodies’ way of guiding them to “stillness, rest, and peacefulness.” Instead of fighting these symptoms, accept them and design nighttime practices of “contented wakefulness” or a great time for meditation and reflection.

Acupuncture treatments will also likely bring some relief to the menopause symptoms, as do some herbal remedies, since re-balancing the body’s elements is particularly important during times of physical stress.

Client Corner: Speaking of Aches, Pain & Relief

Picture this; a college professor cannot lift her arm to write on the chalkboard due to a major shoulder injury. In addition, she has suffered from migraines, severe allergies and even life-threatening allergic reactions to bees and poison sumac for years.

Then a friend suggested that Liz meet Shannon. Feeling that she had nothing to lose, Liz started receiving treatments for her allergies in the winter of ’07, in hopes of reducing her reaction to the coming allergy season.

The results were so “miraculous,” according to Liz, that she asked Shannon to also treat her shoulder pain in advance of her rotator-cuff surgery to repair the three of four tendons she had ripped.

The surgeon did four procedures and kept her in a sling for six weeks, due to the extent of the damage. Due to the unusually prolonged period of immobility, Liz and her physical therapist

anticipated a significant problem with flexibility and strength.

To their surprise, however, Liz had remarkable flexibility and required much less PT than anyone expected.

Thanks to the powerful combination of acupuncture and western medicine, Liz was back to 100 percent within four months.

Liz firmly believes that seeking acupuncture before the surgery put her body in a good, balanced position ready for the challenge of healing; and then continuing the treatments during the recuperation and therapy periods truly fast-tracked her healing.

Liz is pleased to say she is now writing just fine on the chalkboard and back to ballroom dancing (that’s how she injured her shoulder in the first place). Liz extends a huge “thank you” to Shannon and recommends everyone try acupuncture... suggesting, “What do you have to lose, but a problem?”

