

Mornington Complementary Medicine

April 2014

*Have you ever had moxa used in your acupuncture treatment?
Perhaps cupping?
Maybe our practitioners have given you some TCM dietary
advice?*



*This newsletter we are taking the time to talk through
some of the other TCM techniques you may encounter
when you come to have a treatment at
Mornington Complementary Medicine.*

THIS MONTH

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The benefits of Qi Gong

Peter Loupelis

Tai Chi & Qi Gong

The first written references to Qi Gong (pronounced “chee goong”) are dated as far back as 4000 years ago as a dance designed to ward off disease and regulate breathing as a preventative health therapy. Since these early time, it has continued to develop and diverge as an important aspect of both Chinese Medicine and spiritual practices. Different branches and practices have evolved over the last 2000-3000 years, and all have their basis in the idea that good health and happiness come from cultivating one’s own physiological and psychological states using exercise.

These various practices have been influenced over time by Daoist, Confucian and Buddhist philosophies combined with the warrior disciplines, and medical knowledge. There are moving forms and still forms, forms for stretching the sinews, and forms for building strength and flexibility. The one thing that binds all forms is the principle that your breath is vital for physiology, which in turn will improve your state, which in turn increases personal performance. The two basic schools - Nei Gong (inner) and Wei Gong (outer) - differ only in where your attention and intentions are placed; Nei Gong focuses on internal and personal development, whereas Wei Gong focuses more on the development of the physical body. These divisions are theoretical mainly, as practice inevitably involves both.

Lo Te Hsiou describes the psychoneuroimmunological effect of Qi Gong thus:

When properly practiced, Qi Gong activates the parasympathetic circuit of the central nervous system, thereby stimulating the production of neurochemicals which cause the endocrine system to secrete hormones that enhance vitality and boost immunity. These healing hormones in turn help sustain continued production of calming parasympathetic neurotransmitters, establishing a cycle of biofeedback that enables the body to heal itself naturally.

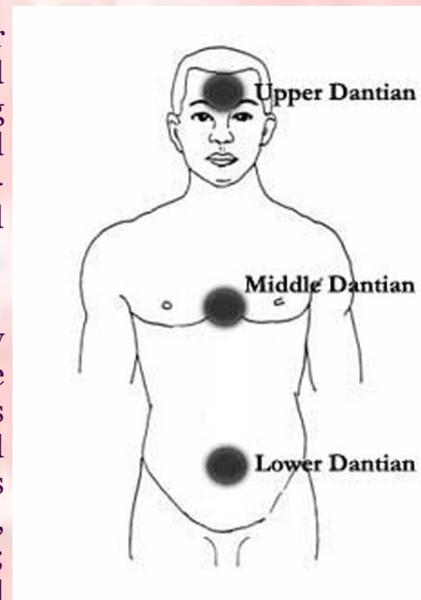
Qi Gong practice is known to switch our nervous system from stress-related sympathetic ‘fight-or-flight’ mode into the restorative healing mode of the parasympathetic, what happens when we are properly resting or sleeping. Its effects on the immune system have been shown to increase T-cell production, and by inhibiting secretion of adrenaline and cortisol it also prevents these hormones from damaging the immune system. Qi Gong’s ability to greatly improve blood circulation and relieve cardiac illness as well as improving respiratory function and lung capacity are well known. All these have an influence of the effectiveness and health of the digestive system, and helps regulate and maintain a good pH balance.

How does it work?

In the Qi Gong tradition, you have 3 bodies: the physical body, the energy body, and the consciousness body. These three bodies are linked to each other and the rest of the world via the three *Dan Tian* (generally referred to as lower, middle, and upper).

Your physical body is governed by your essence/*jing*. Here, your body is in its most *yin* form: dense, material and solid. It is healed through the introduction of nutrients - the bio-chemical building blocks of physical existence, such as what you eat and drink, and the medicines (herbal or pharmaceutical) you consume for therapeutic effect. Most fitness exercises are aimed at enhancing and making changes to physical tissue.

When the lower *Dan Tian* is activated, a gateway to the energy body is opened. The energy body is where the *Qi* dwells - this is the realm of channel systems and where acupuncture works. There is no altering bio-chemistry here, but there is the regulation and movement of *Qi* around the body. Breathwork is important here, as *Qi* is said to follow the breath. When the lower *Dan Tian* is open, then *jing*/essence can be converted into *Qi* to help the energy body; conversely *Qi* can be converted into *jing*/essence to aid the physical body. This is why combining acupuncture treatment with either food therapy or herbal medicine is essential, in that you effect change in both bodies to bring about good health and harmony.



The third body is equated to Consciousness, sometimes translated as Spirit or Mind (in Chinese, *Shen*). Your consciousness governs who you are as an individual; it determines how you think, act, and behave. Connected to the outer world via the upper *Dan Tian*, your consciousness is the filter which experiences and interacts with the world. And our Mind/Consciousness experiences your inner world via the middle *Dan Tian*, located in the centre of our chest. Through this *Dan Tian*, your *Qi* can be transformed into the energy that Consciousness requires to experience your inner world; and in turn your *Shen* can be directed towards your *Qi* to alter your physiology and your states as intention.

Tai Chi Chuan: “supreme ultimate fist”

Probably the single-most popular and famous style of Qi Gong, it is credited by being developed in the Shao Lin Temple during the late 13th Century by Chang San Feng. The story goes that he was inspired by witnessing a battle between a snake and a crane to create a soft flowing, meditative style of martial art. He realised the superior power of the soft over the hard, the tactical wisdom of circular movements, and the importance of moving in response to as well as in anticipation of your opponent’s tactics. Tai Chi involves slow, rhythmic movements, shifting weight from foot to foot, with one posture transforming effortlessly and minimally into the next, while your centre of balance is always in your lower abdomen (*Dan Tian*). Tai Chi has been shown to improve your health in the following common areas:

Muscle strength

Aerobic conditioning

Flexibility

Quality of life

Balance

**These conditions have been shown to have
improvement by patients undertaking Tai Chi:**

Osteo-arthritis	Immune system deficiency
HIV/AIDS	Metabolic Syndrome
Diabetes	Headaches
Fibromyalgia	Depression
Anxiety	Cholesterol levels
Rheumatoid arthritis	Low bone density
Breast cancer	Heart disease
Heart failure	Hypertension
Parkinson's Disease	Sleep problems
Stroke	Stress

**Peter will be teaching Daoist Tai Chi & Qi Gong from
Term 2, 2014**

The details:

The Yoga Room Mornington (upstairs)
4/15 Kenji Street, Mornington

Thursday Evenings 6-7pm

- Term 2 (9weeks) May 1—June 26
- Term 3 (10weeks) July 17th—September 18th
- Term 4 (10 weeks) October 16th—December 18th

Investment:

\$15 per week, term paid in full **OR**
\$20 per class casual attendance

****Contact Peter on 59140080 to make your booking****

***Peter is also available for Acupuncture appointments at
MCM Mondays and Wednesdays 59736886***

Moxa Therapy

Jan Woodcock

Moxibustion, or moxa, is named after the Japanese word *mokusa*, meaning "burning herb." It was first recorded in medical texts during the Song Dynasty (a.d. 960), but it has most likely been in use much longer. It is an important therapy in Traditional Chinese Medicine; the ancient texts advise that moxa should be tried

if acupuncture and herbs have failed to heal the disease. The heat from moxibustion is very penetrating, making it effective for impaired circulation, cold and damp conditions, and yang deficiency. When applied to acupuncture points specific for yang deficiency, the body absorbs the heat into its deepest levels, restoring the body's yang qi and "life-gate fire," the source of all heat and energy in the body.



Moxa is prepared from mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), which is a common perennial herb. The aromatic leaves are dried and repeatedly sifted until they are fluffy.

There are two heating techniques used to apply moxibustion: indirect moxa and direct moxa.

Indirect Moxa



In indirect moxa, the "moxa wool" is rolled into a long cigar shape and wrapped in paper. The cigar-shaped moxa stick is then lighted and held about an inch away from the desired area -- an acupuncture point or other area of the body chosen by the practitioner. Indirect moxa can be used on acupuncture points to achieve a systemic, or body wide, effect or it can be used directly at the site of a problem.

For example, indirect moxa might be applied to a swollen, stiff area such as an arthritic joint. It is also appropriate to apply indirect heat to specific acupuncture points, such as Zusanli (Stomach 36) or Mingmen (Du 4), to create a systemic effect. The heat taken into these points raises the body's metabolism and immunity, so moxibustion at these points can also be used in preventive health care.

One ancient text declares that "one who applies moxa daily to Zusanli (Stomach 36) will be free of the one hundred diseases." Applying moxa to Stomach 36 has an energizing effect on the body, especially in regard to immune and digestive functions. Some indications for its use in Chinese medicine are to treat general weakness, anemia, indigestion, nausea, chronic fatigue, shock, allergies, and asthma. Modern research has confirmed that the immune system is stimulated when the point receives moxa.

Another type of indirect moxa involves rolling the moxa, placing it on the end of an acupuncture needle while the needle is in the body, and igniting it. The heat from the moxa travels down the handle and into the needle. The needle transfers the heat specifically to the desired point on the body.

A common usage that people are often surprised to hear about is its use in the turning of a breech baby. The acupuncture point, UB 67, on the outside of the little toe, when used with moxa will correct a breech presentation in over two-thirds of the time with no other interventions.

Direct Moxa

In direct moxibustion, a small amount of herb is rolled into a cone and burned directly on the skin until warmth is perceived when it is lifted off and extinguished. In other techniques, the moxa is burned on top of a slice of ginger, garlic, or aconite to include the therapeutic effects of those herbs in the treatment.

Some examples of deficiency conditions where moxa is helpful are general immune system strengthening; people who get sick often, have chronic low energy, chronic fatigue, cold hands/feet, etc. Go to the link to [moxafrica on moxibustion's effect on TB in Africa: http://www.moxafrica.org/](http://www.moxafrica.org/), to see how amazing the healing capacity of the herb is. Some painful conditions where moxa is helpful are menstrual cramps, arthritis, muscle pain anywhere in the body, even hot conditions can benefit from moxibustion as it can take heat in when it's needed but can also disperse heat when there is too much.



The other form of direct moxibustion used by acupuncturists is where the loose form of moxa is rolled into cones or small threads and burnt down one quarter to half its length while it is placed on the skin. This technique generally creates more heat and may be better for "cold" conditions than indirect methods. For the most part, however, the form of moxibustion an acupuncturist will use depends on their training and on the patient's condition.

Jan Woodcock can treat a myriad of complaints and takes a holistic approach to health care, by treating your body as a whole to achieve relief from your presenting condition. Jan's approach is focused on helping you understand the dynamics of your complaint and to address the causes of your condition.

Jan is available at Mornington Complementary Medicine on Wednesdays and Thursdays PH: 59736886

Cupping

Cupping is one of the oldest therapeutic applications in TCM, and is discussed in classical texts dating back to the 4th century. An ancient healing technique found in several cultures, cups in TCM were traditionally made of bamboo or hollow animal horn. Modern practitioners mostly use thick, glass or plastic suction cups.

The process itself involves creating a vacuum inside the cup (either with flame or suction) which is then placed on specific acupuncture points, or meridians on the body. The intention behind cupping is to draw out toxins, blockage/stagnation, excess cold/heat from deeper levels of the body to the surface, for release. As the pores of the skin open, blood flow is stimulated and qi flow is regulated and balanced, providing any blockage or toxicity in the body an avenue to exit via the skin's surface. A natural and normal outcome of cupping can be bruising, or in rare cases, even small blistering. Though you may not normally expect to leave your healthcare practitioner with additional bruising, it is surprising how great the release can feel!! (Not to mention it is extremely effective).

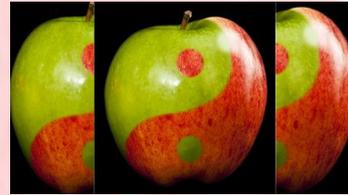
Cups can be left in place (stationary), used to stimulate or regulate meridian qi (sliding) or several cups quickly applied and removed (lightning or flash cups). As with all aspects of TCM, cupping is applied only when indicated and appropriate for your overall constitution, and should only be performed by a qualified practitioner.



“I believe that empowering ourselves with better health is everyone’s right, and that we deserve to prioritise our wellbeing despite life’s other demands. Hectic, modern lives, ever-increasing technologies & the demands of family, work &, well, life! mean that many of us have become disconnected from our bodies & our Hearts, from our neighbours & our communities, and importantly, from the rhythms and wisdom of the natural world. My aim is to work with you & support you in making your health & happiness a priority in your life... so you can be empowered by your health.”

**Jo Hyde is available for appointments every Saturday at
Morningson Complementary Medicine 59736886**

Traditional Chinese Dietary Medicine



Chinese medicine classifies food according to its energetic effects rather than according to its component parts. Certain foods are viewed as warming and nourishing while others are seen as cooling and eliminating; some foods are useful for building qi while others have blood, yang or yin building proprieties. Thus while a breakfast consisting of a banana and yoghurt will always have the same nutritional value in western medicine no matter who is eating it, in traditional Chinese medicine it may be seen as beneficial for those with yin deficiency conditions but detrimental to those with yang deficiency or dampness. Thus a person's underlying constitution, including the strength of their digestive system, determines what foods are most suitable. At the same time Chinese medicine emphasises guidelines on how food should be prepared and eaten if it is to be utilised in the most efficient way.

The Five Flavours

All foods in traditional Chinese medicine are assigned according to the five flavours: sour, bitter, sweet, pungent and salty and the four natures: cool, cold warm and hot. The flavour of food (sour, bitter, sweet, pungent and salty) can be used to predict its effects on the body. Many foods belong to more than one of the five flavours, for example vinegar is seen as being both bitter and sour and cheese as being sour and sweet.

The nature of food (cool, cold, warm and hot) also has a direct effect on the body and modifying its preparation can make it more suitable to an individual's constitution. Raw food is the most cooling for the body, requiring more energy to digest than food that has been cooked. Examples of the same food prepared in a different manner are muesli compared with porridge, salads compared with stir-fried and roasted vegetables, or a piece of fruit that is compared with one that is stewed or baked. In this context a (cooked) potato salad is viewed as more warming than a (raw) green salad but not as warming as a hot baked potato, although the basic qualities of the potato will remain unchanged (that of a sweet flavour with qi and blood tonifying properties).

The five flavours of food with examples

Bitter foods such as rhubarb and dandelion leaf, tend to drain heat and cool. Some bitter foods such as rhubarb have a purgative effect as they induce bowel movements. Sour foods such as grapefruit and olives are cooling and in small amounts aid digestion. Pungent or spicy foods such as onion and cayenne pepper have a warming action, promoting energy to move upwards and outwards to the body's surface. They also have useful properties in dispersing mucus from the lungs. Salty foods such as kelp and soya sauce are cooling and hold fluids in the body. Sweet foods can be divided into two groups 1) Sweet foods that are neutral and nourishing or warm and nourishing, these include meat, legumes, nuts, dairy products and starchy vegetables. 2) Sweet foods that are cooling, these include fruits, sugar, honey and other sweeteners. Potatoes, rice and apples are all considered to belong to the sweet flavour.

Eating a suitable Breakfast

The most suitable time for eating breakfast according to the Chinese 24 hour energy clock is between seven to nine am when the Stomach's energy is at its peak. This is when the body should be hungry and ready to start the day's digestive process. If a person is not hungry in the morning it implies a weakness in the digestive system often resulting from faulty eating habits such as eating large meals late at night or regularly skipping breakfast to save on calories or time. A sugary breakfast such as processed white toast and jam or cornflakes with milk and sugar is not a nutritionally balanced start to the day. There are however, a variety of breakfasts to suit all types and while bread, fruit, yoghurt, muesli, bacon, eggs, pancakes, or porridges form the mainstay of a western approach to breakfast, soups, congees, stir fried vegetables and rice or noodles with meat or tofu are also regularly eaten as breakfast in other cultures. Breakfast does not have to be a huge meal, but it should preferably be eaten with an hour of waking. Depending on the underlying energetic pattern of the individual and taking into account the seasonal environment (cooler foods such as yogurt and fruit can be consumed in warmer weather, with warmer cooked foods such as porridges chosen in colder weather).

Avoiding eating large meals late at night

A large meal taken late in the evening, before sleeping, strains the digestive system, as at this time the Stomach qi is near to its lowest ebb in the 24 hour cycle. Eating late in this way can lead to food accumulation, manifesting with digestive problems such as feeling bloated and full on waking in the morning. Prolonged late eating can lead to chronic digestive problems.

Developing regular eating patterns

Irregular eating times and irregular quantities of food are detrimental to an efficient digestive system. While rigid meal times are not required, taking regular meals instead of frequently skipping meals, imposing self starvation or over eating will be rewarded by a more efficient digestive system.

Appropriate fluid intake

A small amount of warm liquid (such as green tea), with a meal can promote effective digestion, but more than one to two cups, especially if chilled, has the potential to “swamp” the Stomach and impair digestion. Ideally the greater part of the fluids consumed in-between meals should be warm or at room temperature as chilled drinks cool and slow down the digestive process. Wine, in moderation, has warming properties when taken at mealtimes.

Enjoyment of eating

It is also important to remember that our bodies are designed to enjoy the food we eat. Our tongues are pre-programmed to recognise and enjoy the different tastes and our sense of smell will stimulate the production of saliva. Sitting down to eat breakfast, having lunch away from the office desk and timing the evening meal so that it does not coincide with the TV news can all enhance our awareness and enjoyment of our food and this will also serve to assist healthy digestion.



Diet During pregnancy

During pregnancy women are prone to developing some dampness and heat as a matter of course. This can mean that certain foods women may have previously thought of as healthy, for example dairy foods or orange juice, may contribute to problems by further increasing dampness. Pregnancy may also be characterised by food cravings. It would be pleasing to assume that these cravings were always directed toward beneficial foods and indeed they sometimes are, but this is not always the case. However, even apparently unhealthy cravings such as a desire for fried take away- foods, can indicate a real dietary need, in this case for more high quality fat in the diet. If the craving is for very unusual substances such as clay or ashes it is termed ‘pica’ and thought to be due to nutritional deficiency. While traditional Chinese food therapy often lists what are considered to many to be strange foods (such as birds nest and sparrow), the adaptation of traditional Chinese dietary principals into a western diet can be straightforward. There is an abundance of everyday foods that can be used without resorting to strange tasting herbs or difficult to track down ingredients.

That food affects individuals differently is usually obvious to people, although they may not understand why, for example a person with an underlying yang deficiency will find it unpleasant to drink a glass of iced water quickly, while their friend with an excess internal heat condition will crave drinks straight from the fridge or water cooler. A person prone to phlegm disharmonies may immediately notice phlegm forming in the back of their throat following an ice cream, while others notice no such effects. Or a person with a yang deficiency will enjoy a warm curry, while those with a yin deficiency finds that hot spicy foods can trigger feelings hot flushes. It is therefore important in traditional Chinese medicine, to help individuals find healthy foods that suit their bodies rather than following set guidelines rather than propose set dietary guidelines that ignore individual constitutional differences.

Thank-you to <http://acupuncture.rhizome.net.nz/> for these guidelines.