Losing Weight Without Dieting

Using Traditional Chinese Medicine (тсм) to Optimize Organ Function and Lose Weight Easily

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Losing Weight Without Dieting: Using Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) to Optimize Organ Function and Lose Weight Easily

by Michael Hetherington (L.Ac & Yoga Teacher)

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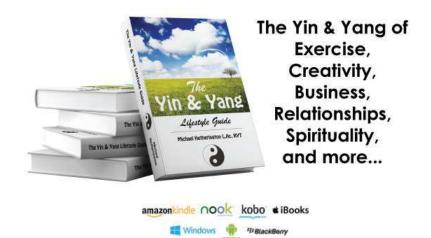
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About the Author

Michael Hetherington is a qualified acupuncturist, lecturer in Oriental medicine and yoga teacher based in Brisbane, Australia. He has a keen interest in mind-body medicine, yoga nidra and Buddhist meditation. Inspired by the teachings of many, he has learned that a light-hearted, joyful approach to life serves best.

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Introduction

What if there was a much more effective and healthier way to loose weight than simply dieting and dropping your calorie intake?

What if you could lose weight and live a more peaceful life by simply aligning yourself with the changes in the seasons?

What if losing weight in a healthy and balanced way also meant that your mind became more calm, balanced and peaceful?

What if you could lose weight, heal other illnesses or diseases and reduce the need for medications, all at the same time?

What if you could lose weight and feel better by simply adjusting your approach, incorporating a few focused exercises and introducing a few herbs and vitamins into your daily life?

What if losing weight had more to do with your posture, breathing and movement habits than just the food you eat?

This book does not claim that this approach is the fastest way to lose weight or that losing weight will require no effort on your part. What it does claim however, is that with a better understanding of how the natural elements influence our bodies, our minds and the environments around us, we can not only lose weight more effectively but we also improve the overall quality of our lives. Learning to live in harmony with the elements of nature will automatically result in a healthier body, a calmer mind and an invigorated spirit.

This book utilizes the teachings and practices of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) to explain how excess weight comes about and how to lose it effectively. One of the main benefits with approaching weight loss using TCM is that it provides a healthy and balanced approach, meaning, it is likely to be sustainable. The TCM approach isn't a path of deprivation or starvation; it is a path of invigoration, stimulation and tonification. This approach also helps to increase the body's overall health and healing capacity making it much more capable of healing any other disease or illness that may be present.

What you will learn in this book is:

- How the Traditional Chinese Medicine approach and philosophy can help you to lose weight.

- How the energy field of the human being works and how to get it working better for you so that you have access to more energy, have better digestion and can lose weight more easily.

- How to strengthen your organs so that they can process, digest and detox your body more efficiently.

- The 3 ways to lose weight according to Chinese medicine principles.

- The 5 elements and how they work together and influence our lives.

- How to improve digestion with a few simple tips and tricks.

- Organ health and how it influences our psychology and mental health.

- Herbs and supplements that promote weight loss.

- A series of muscles that when activated, will improve digestion and promote weight loss.

- How acupuncture and yoga can help you to lose weight more quickly.

- Simple and easy techniques that that can curb any craving or addiction.

Traditional Chinese Medicine in a Nutshell

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is one of the oldest and most field-tested medicines on the planet and if you dig deeper into the teachings you'll soon discover that it's not just a medicine, it's a way of life. That is one of the aims of this book – to provide us with a deeper understanding of the overall picture of Traditional Chinese Medicine and how the principles of its philosophical framework can help us to live a way of life that allows us to easily loose excess weight, heal our bodies of any sickness and calm our mind.

TCM focuses on treating every person as a whole, taking into consideration environmental factors, food, lifestyle, and mental health. It also considers the parent's health, and approaches treatment using a variety of methods depending on the condition. TCM encompasses the practices of nutrition, herbal medicine, supportive environment, exercise, massage, acupuncture, and 'life force cultivation'. Life force cultivation refers to the overall vitality of the person and aims to tonify or increase one's life-force mainly via the practices of exercise (e.g. Tai chi, Qi gong, martial arts), diet, and a healthy and supportive environment.

It is believed that when one's life force is strong and vibrant, disease and sickness will automatically be removed from the body and mind. I have experienced this within my own body and mind, and have seen many people heal deeply when applying TCM principles into their life. The process of life force cultivation is a very important aspect of treating any disease and is closely associated with the immune system. Any practice or treatment that harms the immune system essentially harms one's life force, and the two may be considered one and the same thing.

The condition of obesity or being overweight is considered to be an energetic imbalance that has become very established, so much so that it now expresses itself as a physical illness. Energetic

imbalances occur long before any physical illness or problems are experienced. Therefore, with obesity we need to address the underlying energetic imbalances, as well as treat the dense physicality of the body. In this book we will go through this process in detail. One of the aims is to provide us with a new way of looking at the environmental forces and the way they influence us, inside and out. In Chinese and Oriental medicine, it is understood that all conditions that we experience in the outside world are exactly the same forces of nature that influence our internal world. Therefore, to observe and study the external world can help us understand our internal world, and vice versa. When we realize that our bodies are governed by the same natural laws seen in the external world, a recontextualization occurs as we adjust our lifestyle to be more in accord with these natural forces. When we are more in-sync with these naturally occurring forces, life becomes a lot more enjoyable and free flowing. In the case of obesity, excess weight tends to fall away as all physical and mental phenomena begin to balance themselves out. To begin on our journey into the energetic forces of nature we need to look at the human body and in particular the human energy field.

The Human Energy Field

One of the first things we need to get more familiar with is the human energy field. We are electrical beings with an incredible nervous system that governs our entire bodies. It is this electro magnetic energy that holds all our cells together and allows the nervous system to communicate messages throughout the body. Our bodies depend on the smooth and undisturbed flow of these electrical pulses of information for proper organ function. When these networks get blocked or impaired, information doesn't always arrive at the correct destination, or the system receives incorrect or delayed information. Over time this leads to a kind of physiological breakdown within the body and brings up all sorts of complicated health issues.

This kind of information system is not only limited to the nervous system. TCM also works with a more subtle energetic system known as the meridian system. The meridian system is a vast network of energetic pathways that works at distributing energy and moving blood and nutrients around our body. The energy that moves within us, commonly referred to as Qi, exists not only inside our bodies, but also outside of our bodies, permeating all matter. Qi is a hard concept to explain, and difficult to translate into English, but the most common way to describe it is 'life energy'. When this Qi energy flows through us undisturbed; smoothly moving blood and nutrients to our organs, our life-force becomes very vibrant and radiant, and our psychological state tends to become very calm and stable. When this Qi energy is blocked or stagnant for one reason or another, common symptoms include a 'foggy' head, fatigue, body pain, depression, and digestive problems such as bloating.

When the flow of Qi is impaired for long periods of time, it eventually manifests on the physical plane as some form of chronic sickness or disease. Most disease is treatable and curable if the flow of Qi and blood is restored. I must mention though, not all disease is curable,

as it may have something to do with past karmas of that person, or it simply may be the part of the degeneration process. Even so, all disease can be treated, and the overall levels of pain and suffering experienced can be greatly reduced simply through the process of re-establishing the flow of Qi and blood throughout the body.

In many cases, if the initial signs and symptoms are not addressed energetically, then after some time more complicated health conditions tend to arise. When things become more and more complicated, more and more drugs and treatments are required to control the myriad of signs and symptoms, which can further complicate the condition. This is likely because the underlying energetic imbalance has not been addressed.

When some form of sickness arises in the physical body, one should also be addressing both energetic and mental health to correct the disease, and not simply bombarding the body with pharmaceuticals and hoping the illness will go away. The human being is a complex creature that is multi-dimensional in nature. As well as a physical body, we have a more subtle mental/emotional psychological body, and finally a spiritual body, which is the subtlest of all. Chinese and Oriental Medicine acknowledges all these levels and aims to treat the whole, whereas the Western medical model does not acknowledge the energetic body and therefore does not aim to treat on that level. This is the main difference in the approaches of TCM and Western medicine.

I believe that all disease, sickness and injury happens to us in order to teach us something. Illness acts like a signpost, asking us to stop and question our direction in life, or re-asses the way we are choosing to live. If we can learn from our sickness then we can often overcome it and cure it.

In the case of obesity, it is unlikely to be of due to a distant karmic issue, and it is not necessary a degenerative condition, therefore it is potentially both treatable and curable given the right conditions. For obesity to exist there must already be an underlying energetic issue within the body - this is a given. In such a case, one of the first priorities is to bring the meridians back into energetic balance and restore proper organ function.

Supporting Life Energy or Harming Life Energy

Everything in this world has the ability to either support life or harm and destroy life. As a general guide anything that glorifies or supports violence, addictive behaviours, dishonesty, stealing, exploitation, greed, fear, guilt, anger or shame is harmful to life energy and will weaken the immune system in time. Anything that supports life is what is left when you take away all negativity, and is usually expressed as willingness, acceptance, courage, service, unconditional love, gratitude, and so on.

I have put together a list to help clarify these behaviours. This list serves only as a guide and therefore does not claim to be absolute. From my own experience and understanding I have found what is on this list to be true in most cases. There is a tendency for more evolved beings that carry a supportive life energy field to have similar characters, and this is exemplified by this list. It also therefore shows that those with a low energy field also tend to have similar characteristics.

For some people, this list may be confronting because we may identify some of our behaviours as harmful to ourselves and others. We need to understand that we are all connected and all of our behaviours affect not only ourselves but also all beings. When we really embody this understanding, we change our behaviours to that which supports life, and does not harm it.

For those who are ill, aged or weak, it is more important to surround yourself with things that will uplift your energy field, and avoid those things that don't. For young people and most healthy people, their energy field can handle the harmful energy fields more so than the average Joe, yet if the exposure to harmful energy fields continues for extended periods of time, eventually their own energy field will become impaired and weakened resulting in sickness or mental instability. Ideally, the basic rule is; engage with activities and surround your environment with at least 80% of those things that support life energy and avoid those things that harm life energy.

I must also mention that there is a point, when a being becomes highly advanced and self realized that harmful energy fields will have little effect on them, but this is very rare and until then, these guidelines serve most of us.

Things that Support Life Energy

<u>General Attitudes</u> Lets work together How can I help? We are all different and there is no better than... Somehow I created this situation and I will take steps to change it.. There must be a better solution Lets try again Appreciation, gratitude Calmness, patience

Relationships

Supportive, honest, caring, good communication, generous, loving, giving, thoughtful, considerate, appreciative, inspiring

<u>Music</u>

Acoustic, classical, folk, ambient, most easy listening, jazz, world music, happy go lucky

<u>Films</u>

Most drama, nature, some documentaries, musicals, comedy, some fantasy, some kids

TV Shows

Inspiring, some comedy, educational, some sports, cooking without competition, travel

<u>Sports</u>

Soccer, golf, most martial arts, gym, walking, running, Olympics

Foods

Home cooked meals, fruits, vegetables, water, tea

Self Care / Hygiene

Natural soaps, essential oils, organic and natural shampoo's, generally least amount of chemicals in products, tea tree, eucalyptus

<u>Other</u>

Able to change and adapt without loosing balance of mind. Let go of trying to control others and life

Things that Harm Life Energy

General Attitudes

I win, you lose I want... I deserve.... I am better than.... Us vs Them They did this to me Why me? Poor me I give up. I can't be bothered I could never do that Winging, complaining Impatiece, intolerance, fearfulness

<u>Relationships</u> Demanding, manipulative, exploitative, disempowering, controlling, violent, abusive, dishonest

<u>Music</u>

Rap, heavy metal, death metal, R'n'B, most pop music, most club dance music, most electronic

<u>Films</u>

Horror, most action, revenge plots, anything that glorifies crime, war

TV Shows

Sitcoms, reality tv, commercial tv, news, revenge plots, some drama

<u>Sports</u>

Boxing, fighting, animal fighting, hunting

<u>Foods</u>

Packaged and processed foods, sugars, alcohol

Self Care / Hygiene

Chemical deodorants and perfumes, chemical toothpastes, chemical shampoos, hair spray, home and car deodorizers,

<u>Other</u>

Addictions, e.g. gambling, drugs, alcohol, sex, power, drama, talking, food, shopping, video games

Restoring Proper Organ Function is More Important Than Calorie Counting (Dieting)

The most important thing in treating any disease or condition, whether it is an addiction, the flu or obesity, the primary aim is to increase the function of the organs so that they have enough energy to overcome the pathology (sickness). When our organs are functioning at their highest potential, the immune system is strong, the mind is steady, the metabolism is healthy and the potential of any disease is dramatically reduced.

In the case of obesity, the organs that are primarily affected are the Stomach and Spleen (spleen in TCM also refers to the pancreas). This means that the Stomach and Spleen organ function has been compromised somewhere along the line. It can be influenced by genetics, meaning the person is born with an underdeveloped or under functioning spleen and stomach organ. However it is more likely that it is due to the foods and drinks consumed during upbringing. Over time, years and years of these foods and behaviours has compromised the organ function to such an extent that the digestive fire has gone out almost completely and the metabolism has become impaired.

When our organs are 'tonified' (i.e. strengthened), and working well, we can give them almost anything and they will be able to handle it. Give a body builder some chocolate and ice-cream and it won't have much of an effect on their overall Stomach and Spleen function. Sure, it will have a slight affect, but because their organ function is likely to be strong, the organs will probably re-establish energetic balance within a few hours after eating the chocolate or ice-cream. But, give an overweight person with diabetes some chocolate or icecream and, because their organ function is already weak, it will have a massive effect on their Stomach and Spleen function. Often these organs won't even get the opportunity to correct themselves before the next meal comes down to meet them. Often, in many cases the stomach and spleen function doesn't regain balance or operate at full function for many years because their function has been compromised too many times for too long. If we work at strengthening the function of the Stomach and Spleen and other organs in the body they will eventually be able to handle most foods or drink in moderation. A lot of allergies and intolerances are generated simply because the organs are in a weakened state and get overwhelmed with certain foods. I believe that any allergens and intolerances can be cured if the organs in question are strengthened and the energy field of the person cultivated. We will explore how to strengthen the organ function in the following chapters.

The main culprits that compromise the Stomach and Spleen organs are cows milk and diary products in general. The milk and diary industry has done well to trick most of us into believing that milk is actually good for us. For most of us, it's not! Only very few people have a metabolism and genetic makeup that can handle it in a way that it doesn't impair their body's ability to function. However with obesity, it is a sure sign that the metabolism is not strong enough to handle such damp and phlegm producing foods such as milk and dairy and therefore should be avoided completely or greatly reduced. Flavored milks should be avoided because they are loaded up with sugars that further damage the Spleen.

To Summarize:

- Increasing organ function is the most important approach to healing and losing weight.

- The Stomach and Spleen (pancreas) organs are the primary organs affected in weight gain.

- When organs are strong than they will be able to handle any foods and potentially overcome any intolerances or allergies previously triggered by certain foods.

- Milk and diary products will need to be avoided or reduced to help restore the Stomach and Spleen.

Signs of Healthy Organ Function

One of the most obvious signs of the internal health of our organs is the condition of our bowel movements. A healthy person with good organ function has at least one healthy bowel motion a day. If it is not happening at least once a day than we have probably got constipation. The longer the time between bowel motions the worse the constipation and the worse the organ function. This needs to be addressed sooner rather than later. Pharmaceutical drugs, like codeine are well known for causing constipation. You need to work at getting your bowel movements to one a day. The simplest suggestion is to eat oats for breakfast and add some prunes and linseed to promote healthy bowel movements. Magnesium oxide is a substance you can take that has a very laxative effect and pulls out excess water in the gastrointestinal tract and cleans out the colon. It may also be worth getting a series of colonic irrigation treatments (also known as colon cleansing) to help flush the system out (wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonic irrigation). Yoga, acupuncture and regular exercise will also help greatly in stimulating the organs and helping the body in producing regular and healthy bowel motions.

For a healthy bowel movement it generally needs to be well formed and brown in color. If they are runny, black, like little pebbles, painful to pass or stink to high hell then this is a sign something inside is not doing so well. Try to adjust your foods, and if it was a bad bowel motion see if you can remember what it was that you ate that could have caused it.

To Summarize:

- Bowel motions are a good indicator of internal organ health.
- Having a bowel motions once a day is a healthy sign.
- Having well formed, brown in color bowel motions and don't smell too bad are all good signs.

- If bowel motions are not happening once a day or they are not well formed or smell very bad most of the time then consider getting a series of colonic irrigation treatments and incorporating well cooked oats and prunes into your breakfast.

- Acupuncture, yoga and exercise will also assist in producing healthy and regular bowel motions.

Posture and Weight Loss

As previously mentioned, obesity is a sign that the energetic meridians are impaired in some way and not functioning to their potential. Posture is one of the keys to getting our energetic system back "online". A correct posture automatically corrects the channels running up the front and the back of the body, which play a large part in the overall health of the body and also the health of the mind. You can tell if someone is depressed or full of anxiety by his or her posture, as I'm sure you have seen. We can change our mood and mental state by changing our posture. Lets have a look at a few ways to do this.

1. Breath Through the Nose

Ok, so first, rest the tip of the tongue on the top of the mouth, just behind the front teeth and breathe steadily through the nose. Do this often, all the time in fact. Reduce and avoid breathing through the mouth – breathing through the mouth is a sure way to lose a lot of energy and keep the mind dull. When we place the tongue on the top of the mouth we are connecting the front (Ren) and the back (Du) channels up. The Ren channel runs up the very front of the body and the Du channel runs up the spine on the back of the body, and the two meet in the mouth.

The benefits of this are:

- Stabilizes breath & nervous system = Clear, calm and steady mind
- Promotes a sense of lightness in the body
- Reduces unnecessary speech (wastes energy)
- Head balances better on the neck

- More steady energy (if you feel tired or fatigued, just sit or lie down and practice this for 15 minutes or so)

If we have a blocked nose most of the time, this is a sure sign of too much phlegm and damp in our bodies. It will take time to clear it,

start by reducing phlegmy foods like ice-cream, cheese, milk, bananas, and any deep fried oily foods. Walk, walk, walk! This will help move the phlegm so our body can get rid of it. Walk until the nasal passages begin to clear. We can also use nasal flushes that are available at the chemist or drug stores. They work in a similar way as the practice of 'Neti', that is practiced in yoga. The Yogis use Neti pots to flush the toxins out and to invigorate the breath and energetic system. If we can't breath through the nose regularly, it makes it very difficult to get the mind and body to a calm yet energetic state.



Woman using a neti pot. Image courtesy of Aikhan

2. Sitting

We want to promote the healthy flow of energy through the body, so we must learn to sit properly. It's all to do with the orientation of the hips. When we sit, make sure that the knees are slightly lower than the hips. Allow the hips to roll slightly forward, this will help create a healthy lower back arch and then the head will need to come back to balance on the shoulder. This is a healthy position for the spine.

The worst posture that is most common around the place is that the tailbone is tucked under and the knees are higher than the hips. The spine curls out and is rounded and the head comes forward. This posture totally shuts down the energy flow through the abdominal cavity and the channels on the front of the body.

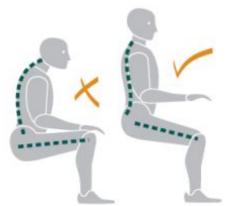


Image from www.necksolutions.com

Poorly designed furniture is one of the main contributors to this phenomenon. Also, the over use of computers and the use of smart phones and other electronic gadgets contribute greatly to making our posture even worse. Have regular breaks from the computer and minimize your use of smart phones and electronic gadgets. Getting our sitting posture correct and breathing properly is the simplest and probably the most beneficial step we can take. We can practice it anytime, anywhere and it's free. It does take a little time to establish these practices, but once established, it makes a massive difference to your energy levels.

Having a good posture also exudes confidence. Fake confidence comes from the ego and is not sustainable. Real confidence actually comes from a healthy energy field that is flowing within and all around you. This is what people unconsciously pick up on. They feel and sense a healthy energy field – having a healthy energy field actually influences everyone around you because it uplifts their energy field also. The opposite sex tends to become more attracted to us because of the energy field. You realize after some time, that its not what you do, say or think that matters so much, it's how well your energy field flows around you and how much you remain in touch with this energy field, that matters the most. When we keep our energy field healthy, life just has a way of working out.

To Summarize:

- Adjusting your posture can easily alter your mood and state of mind.

- Breathing through the nose and resting the tip of the tongue on the top of the mouth is one of the simplest and easiest things you can do to uplift your energy field and clear the mind.

- Cleansing the nasal cavities by using methods like the neti pot will assist in easier breathing and uplift your energy.

Sitting with the knees slightly lower than the hips helps your back to be straighter when sitting.

- Having regular breaks from the computer reduces stagnation.

- Having good posture automatically uplifts your energy field and generates confidence without effort.

3 Ways to Lose Weight According to TCM

There are really only 3 ways to lose weight and 2 out of those 3 are actually harmful and not recommended. The third option that I discuss in great detail throughout this book is the most balanced and healthiest approach to weight loss according to TCM. Obesity is basically caused by an overload of cold, damp producing foods and liquids that dulls the digestive fire needed to process foods efficiently.

Ok, so what are the 3 methods to loose weight according to TCM?

1. The "Cold Purge"

It involves purging the body by the use of cold foods and diuretics. It essentially damages the Spleen and Stomach and can leave the person looking very pale and fatigued or sometimes wired and ungrounded and totally mentally unstable. The Stomach and Spleen are important in the overall function of the immune system and are also involved in mental cognition and processing. Therefore this method of weight loss, though it may be rapid, is potentially very harmful and can lead to long-term weakness of our organ function, threatening our mental stability. Anorexia and other eating disorders tend to fit under this method.

2. The second method is through using stimulants to stimulate the Qi and blood and send Qi up and outwards.

It's like burning wood in a fire, the internal energies are released upwards and outwards. It's basically equivalent to taking amphetamines (e.g. 'speed'), pharmaceutical uppers and coffee to gain energy. Every now and then coffee and other non-chemical stimulants are fine and can be fun, it only becomes a problem when overused and abused, as is true with all substances. What's happening when we burn our internal fire is that we are tapping into the kidney energy stores and depleting them. Signs and symptoms of this include massive waves of fatigue, insomnia, mental instability and a tendency towards burst of uncontrollable anger. It also leads easily to an addiction to stimulants because without the stimulant one feels very, very fatigued. Essential fluids are lost in the forms of excessive perspiration and urination. In some obese cases a little stimulant can be helpful, like green tea or black coffee just to kick over the metabolism. Things like chronic fatigue and addiction to stimulants are a regular occurrence if this method is employed and supported continually. Rock stars, movie stars and high flyers tend to get caught up on this method.

3. The third and healthiest way to lose weight effectively is to support and tonify the stomach and spleen organs and meridians.

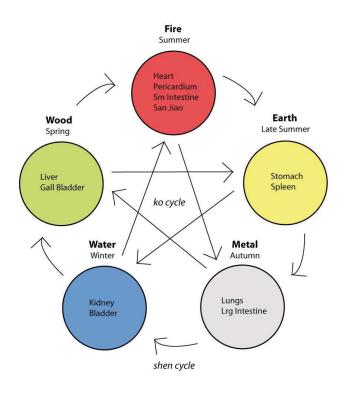
We essentially need to bring the Stomach and Spleen up to optimal function so they can easily digest foods and help eliminate any waste. This process will automatically bring about weight loss and a more calm, clear, and balanced mind. It will also be required to support the other organs and elements that have a direct relationship and influence the Stomach and Spleen's ability to function.

So, how to do we tonify the Stomach and the Spleen? In order to understand this process, we need to look at the '5 elements' and how they influence each other. It's not difficult or complex to understand. There is a very logical process to this method and if you take the time to understand the background theory to it, it's much easier to apply and follow in daily life. The first thing to understand is that the Stomach and Spleen belong to the Earth element in the '5 Element Theory'.

The 5 Elements Explained

The 5 Elements can also be described as the 5 phases, and refer to the process of change that we see in nature. The seasons are a good example of these phases, from Spring to Winter, and from Summer to Autumn. This process of change is always occurring and there is a natural flow of things, and a natural law at work continuously. In the ideal situation, energy flows smoothly from one phase to the next, nourishing and supporting life as it goes. In Oriental Medicine it is understood that whatever factors influence our external environment, the same factors influence our internal environment. Therefore, these seasonal changes that are occurring on the outside are also influencing our internal condition.

To get a better understanding of the 5 elements lets have a look at the picture below.



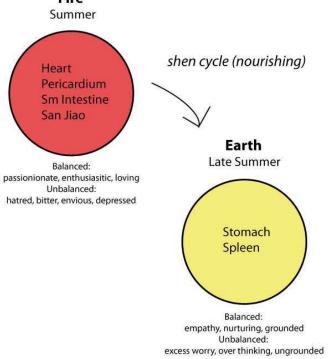
The Relationships Between the 5 Elements

There are 2 main types of relationships that occur between these elements. One is called the *Shen* cycle, or nurturing cycle, and the other is the *Ko* cycle, or controlling cycle.

Shen Cycle Explained

In the case of obesity, it is most likely that the Stomach and Spleen are impaired (Earth element). According to the *Shen* cycle the Earth element is to be nourished by the Fire element (the heart and the small intestine).

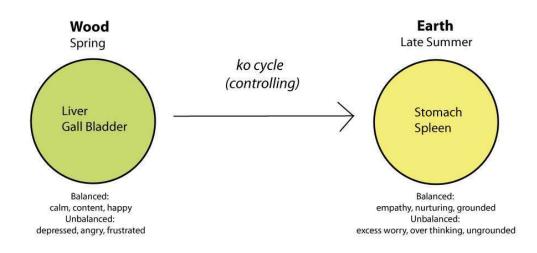




Now, this is where it gets interesting. In many cases the condition is manifest in an element, for example, obesity manifesting within the Earth element. However, in most cases the initial problem and imbalance began in the element before it. So in the case of the *Shen* cycle, it was Fire that had the initial imbalance. This fire imbalance then built up and started affecting the elements that flow on after it; in this case, the Earth element. In this example, the fire element was most likely dampened out or weakened, and then this weakened Fire element led to the inability to provide fire to the Earth element (the fire in the belly = metabolism). Therefore, the foods now accumulate in the Stomach and Spleen but there isn't enough Fire element to break them down and digest them properly. We now have an Earth element imbalance that was actually initiated from the Fire element. Got it?! So, in such a case we need to address both the Fire and the Earth element imbalances.

Ko Cycle Explained

In the case of the *Ko* cycle, the Wood element is controlling and influencing the Earth element as illustrated below.



The Wood element tends to become stagnant or toxic depending on the person and lifestyle. The Wood element loves to move and express itself, so if there has not been enough movement in the body, then the Wood element starts getting unhappy and stagnant. This stagnation leads to the back-log of energy (also resulting in constipation), and thus impairing the flow-on effect to the Earth element. Now the Stomach and Spleen of the Earth element don't have much energy to work with, resulting in food simply sitting in the belly and stagnating, causing bloating, gas, and constipation. This stagnation of food and energy only adds more weight to the body. A toxic Liver, which can be a result of a multitude of sources, eventually burdens the Liver and impairs its function. All toxic substances will end up in the Liver at some point, as the job of the Liver is to filter toxins out of the blood stream. Toxins usually come from things like toxic foods (processed sugars, artificial colors and flavours, deep-fried foods, preservatives, alcohol), chemicals, and pharmaceutical drugs just to name a few. The impairment of Liver function reduces its capacity to function and send its energy onto the Earth element, again resulting in sluggish digestion.

So, from the perspective of the 5 Element Theory, there are a few potential causes of obesity which originate from the other organs in the system. Every body is different and carries around different levels of these elements. The varying levels of these elements that we have within us are largely influenced by genetic factors, our environment, our thinking, our emotional health, and of course, the foods and fluids that we consume.

In the initial stages of obesity or any disease, it is easier to correct the imbalances. If much time has passed and the imbalances have become severe and chronic, then it will take a much longer period of time correct and to restore proper energetic function.

To Summarize:

- The 5 elements work together in a dynamic relationship that exist both inside our bodies and in the external environment.

- Each Element contains and influences a set of organs.

- The *Shen* cycle is the nourishing cycle and works to nourish and support the element after it.

- The *Ko* cycle has more of a controlling and dominating influence and affects the Element that is 2 elements in front of it.

- The Element most effected by excess weight is the Stomach and Spleen which belong to the Earth Element.

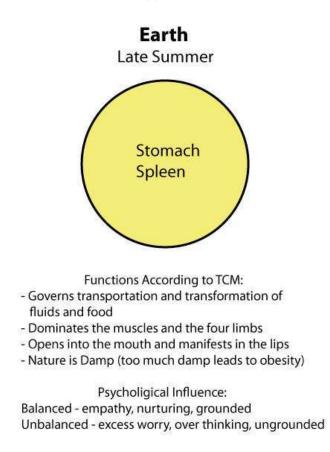
- The Fire element (Heart, Small Intestine) is in the *Shen* cycle relationship with the Earth element.

- The Wood Element (Live and Gallbladder) is in the *Ko* cycle relationship with the Earth Element.

- Therefore, the Fire and the Wood Element will also need to be treated and supported so that they can heal the Earth element.

Digestion and Mindful Eating

The Stomach and Spleen as previously mentioned are within the Earth Element. The Earth element is a very important element, as it has to do with how we receive our energy from the food and drinks



that we ingest.

If the Stomach and Spleen are working well then we are able to digest foods easily and utilize the energy from these foods easily and readily. Emotionally and psychologically, the Earth element has to do with clarity of thought and the ability to feel grounded and supported by life. When we feel supported by life there is little need to worry and stress about the way things will turn out. Over-thinking and worry can actually harm your digestive function. Many people eat foods while watching the news on TV, or reading the newspaper. As I'm sure you know, the messages in the news are often not very nurturing and supportive, so in actual fact, if you eat while watching the news or reading the newspaper you will be eating and ingesting that kind of information and negativity as you eat! Have you ever sat down with a plate of food, turned on the TV and the next thing you know all the food is gone and you don't even remember eating it? This is a sign that you eat with little awareness, and this is not a healthy process for the body or the mind.

Try to be really mindful and aware during your eating time. It's actually a great practice to avoid talking when eating, and instead, focus just on the eating process. Eat slowly and with awareness, enjoy the food, respect and honor the food, and the energy it will supply you. It's about having a good relationship with your food and that's why cooking your own food or learning how to cook is an important part of the process also. Learn to respect and be grateful towards mother earth and what she provides us with to sustain our lives. We are not aiming to get addicted to the pleasure of eating, as this does not cultivate a balanced and healthy mind. What we are doing is simply learning to appreciate the food in that moment, being fully aware in that moment, and no-where else. This attitude will make a difference to your digestion if you practice it regularly.

The Health of our Organs Influences our Psychology

The unique model of Oriental medicine suggests that our organs have a direct influence on our psychology, because it is believed that our body and mind are intrinsically inter-connected. Therefore, you cannot treat things in isolation. To have a healthy body means one is also likely to have a healthy mind and vice versa. This is quite amazing and I have seen this reflected in hundreds and hundreds of people I have treated in clinic and with the many people I deal with in daily life. There are definitely common threads with people who seem to have the same imbalances. Therefore, what may be simply shrugged off as a negative personality characteristic (anger, frustration, impatient, sadness, depression, etc) may actually simply be the result of an underlying organ and energetic imbalance. Correct the imbalance and the negative trait will often disappear.

The psychological characteristic of the Stomach and Spleen is empathy, worry and excess thinking. When the Stomach and Spleen are healthy, the person is grounded, nurturing, involved in the community, and nourishes relationships that are important to them. When the Stomach and Spleen are out of balance, the person tends to over-think, worry a lot (literally worry themselves sick), winge, complain, dramatize, gossip, become ungrounded, and have little trust or faith that life will simply work out fine.

When the Fire element (Heart and Small Intestine) is balanced the person is enthusiastic, has energy, inspires others, is grounded and has a real sense of purpose in their life. The Heart in the Fire element is strongly associated with the mind and spirit so when this is out of balance it can lead to all sorts or mental illnesses. When unbalanced the person usually has insomnia or poor sleeping patterns, is depressed, neurotic, ungrounded, confused, lacks motivation and tends to become very dull, uninspiring or psychotic.

When the Wood element (Liver and Gall Bladder) is balanced the person is generally very calm yet very alert like a warrior, is content, enjoys life and movement, is flexible and adaptable to change, is enthusiastic and enjoys the way their life is unfolding. When unbalanced, the person becomes easily frustrated, angry, irritated, domineering or passive, lacks energy, becomes depressed, discontented and lacking of calmness.

This also suggests that if someone acquires weight loss in an unhealthy and unbalanced way there is a very real risk that their general psychology and mental health will become more unstable, often giving way to neurotic or even psychotic behavior.

To Summarize:

- The health of our organs influences our psychology and mental health.

The Stomach and Spleens main characteristics are empathy, worry and excess thinking.

- The Heart and Small Intestines main characteristics are love, enthusiasm and hate

- The Liver and Gall Bladders main characteristics are anger, frustration and contentment.

- Unhealthy and unbalanced methods of weight loss can lead to mental instability.

Herbs and Supplements for Weight Loss

Here is a list of herbs that support the main organs involved in the weight loss process. Taking herbs alongside a healthy diet, exercise and other methods will provide much quicker and more effective results. Just taking herbs or a diet pill without engaging in other methods will bring little results.

<u>St Mary's Thistle</u> - Detoxes the liver, simulates digestion.

<u>Dandelion Root</u> - Detoxes the liver, stimulates digestion.

<u>Vitamin C</u> (3 grams a day) – It's cheap and effective. Cleans out the liver and organs, repairs tissue, natural anti-depressant, and supports the immune system just to name a few.

<u>*Ginseng*</u> - Tonifies spleen and stomach and nourishes kidneys. Also acts as an energy tonic. Good for sexual organ health.

<u>Green Tea</u> - Tonifies stomach and spleen, digestive stimulant, clears mind.

Cinnamon - Stimulates digestion

<u>Chinese Herbal Formula</u> - Four Gentlemen decoction (Si Jun Zi Tang)

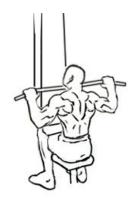
Muscles That Strengthen Stomach and Spleen Organs and Meridians

To fast track our results, we need to focus on strengthening these muscles in our training programs. Notice how a lot of these muscles are actually on the back of the body, so tonifying these muscles will help the spine become more erect and will increase our overall energy levels dramatically. If we "switch on" these muscles every day we will notice a quick effect on our overall ability to think, a better and easier posture, a clearer mind, and more energy available. We don't need to really work hard and exhaust ourselves when working with these muscles, they just need to be activated. I generally recommend that people don't over exert themselves as this can cause more problems. Over exertion often leads to massive energy drain. If you feel completely exhausted after doing exercise than you have gone too hard, so back off a bit and focus more on getting your vitamins and minerals up. Gradually build up to your training over time. It is much better to do a little bit every day to switch our energy on and get it flowing than blasting ourselves once or twice a week and feeling exhausted by it.

These are the muscles to focus on and help us get started at tonifying the Spleen and Stomach.

Latissimus Dorsi

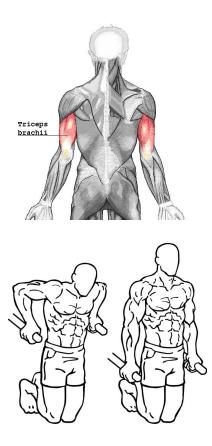




Exercises for the latissimus dorsi- Lat Pull Down (image thanks to Everkinetic)

Check out this YouTube video to get the full instructions - Lat Pull Down Video <u>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEb-dwU3VF4</u>

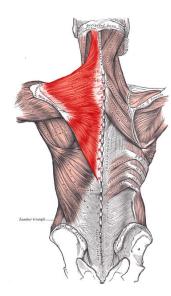
<u>Triceps</u>

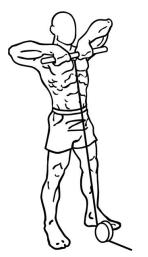


Exercises for the Triceps – Dips (image thanks to Everkinetic)

Check out this YouTube video to get the full instructions - Dips Video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nx9gVDCnT84

<u>Trapezius</u>





Exercises for the Trapezius – Upright Row (image thanks to Everkinetic)

Check out this YouTube video to get the full instructions - Upright Row Video <u>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAGSZPIQjwo</u>

Brachioradialis (muscle of the forearm)



Exercises for the Brachioradialis – Dumbbell Wrist Curls (sorry, no image available)

Check out this YouTube video to get the full instruction - Dumbell Wrist Curls Video <u>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ac_qmBjkFl</u>

To support the Liver and Gallbladder (Earth element), target the <u>Pectorals</u>, <u>Anterior deltoids</u> and the <u>Rhomboid</u> muscles. To support the Heart and Small intestine (Fire element), target the Subscapularis, the <u>Abdominals</u> and the <u>Quadriceps</u>. To design a workout to target these muscles speak with a personal trainer or an exercise physiologist to learn the proper technique when weight training.

Weight Loss – The Plan

"Walking is man's best medicine" ~ Hippocrates

Ok, so if we understand the 5 Elements and how they are interacting we can now develop a plan of action. The actions are listed from the highest priority to the lowest.

According to the 5 Elements we need to:

- a) Tonify the Stomach and Spleen
- b) Remove damp and phlegm from the system
- c) Add more warmth and Fire to the belly and increase metabolism
- d) Remove energy stagnation, and detox the liver

It is quiet hard to isolate one from the other because as we have discussed previously, all things are inter-connected and treating one element will have a flow-on effect with the next element, and so on. The list format is to simply help clarify in the mind the approach to take.

a) How to Tonify the stomach and spleen

- 1. Drink many little cups of green tea daily.
- 2. Add ginger to our foods and drink some tea with ginger in it.
- 3. Add a little spice to our foods.

4. Tap Spleen 21 acupuncture point about 20 times with fingertips at least a few times a day. Best time is just after eating.



5. Go for long but steady walks often. Find a way to make it easy and enjoyable, don't go too hard too soon. Please avoid putting iPods on your body or carrying things in your hands, as they all interfere with the circulation of your energy around the body. Any uneven movements on the body also cause structural problems for the musculoskeletal system. Allow our body to move equally and bilaterally. And why not just listen to nature, there is plenty already happening without adding more.

6. Do some weight training to tonify the muscles outlined in the previous chapter. Seek help from a personal trainer, or at least research the correct techniques before starting a weights program.

7. Practice Yoga for a full body workout and stretch.

8. Seek Acupuncture to stimulate the system and restore balance.

9. Practice Qi Gong or Tai Chi to stimulate energy flow.

10. Watch only inspiring and uplifting films and TV shows. This keeps your life force strong.

11. Hang out with people that have energy and inspire you.

b) How to remove damp and phlegm from the system

- 1. Use orange peel in cooking (eg. With rice)
- 2. Avoid diary, meat, and cold foods

3. Rub gently the lymphatic areas of the body daily. Under the breasts (where the bottom of the bra would be), and on both the outside and the inside of the thighs.

4. Go for walks often.

5. Have a Sauna, or do 'Hot yoga'.

- 6. Reduce your food intake.
- 7. Practice Yoga.
- 8. Have regular Massage.

c) How to add more warmth and fire to the belly, and increase metabolism

1. Add warming herbs to foods such as chilli, cinnamon, ginger, etc.

- 2. Consume well-cooked foods.
- 3. Have a Sauna/steam room.
- 4. Practice 'Hot yoga'.
- 5. Drink Hot tea and other hot drinks.
- 6. Avoid cold foods, cold drinks, and cold environments.
- 7. Follow your inspiration.
- 8. Hang around people that inspire you.
- d) How to remove energy stagnation, and detox the liver
 - 1. Go for walks often.
 - 2. Practice gentle yoga to start with.
 - 3. Do any activity that involves movement.
 - 4. Drink lemon water.
 - 5. Take Vitamin C (at least 3 grams a day).
 - 6. Drink Green tea.
 - 7. Take Chinese Herbs.

8. Rub gently the lymphatic areas of the body daily. Under the breasts (where the bottom of the bra would be), and on both the outside and the inside of the thighs.

Main Things to Avoid so as not to Damage Stomach and Spleen

- Avoid Ice cold water and cold drinks
- Avoid Ice cream
- Avoid Cold Milk
- Avoid Diary.
- Avoid too many sugars
- Avoid overeating eat only to 80% full

- Avoid oily heavy foods. How do they make you feel after eating them? Become aware of how this type of food makes you feel for the next few hours. Is it worth it?

- Avoid excess talking, excess thinking, or over-dramatizing things.

- Avoid walking or standing when eating. It's best to sit and take our time.

An Example of a Daily Plan

- Wake early, meditate, go for a brisk walk or lift a few weights (target back of the body) to switch on the body and mind.

- Eat a nourishing breakfast, such as well-cooked porridge or Congee (Rice porridge), with some spices in it, and maybe a little honey, prunes, or dates for sweetness. Avoid overeating. Eat it slowly, taking your time.

- Drink small cups of green tea throughout the day. Tap Spleen 21 a few times throughout the day to get a boost of energy and help digestion.

- If stuck at a computer or desk and feeling tired, go for a walk around the block. Don't take your Ipod, etc. Practice simply observing life happening all around you. Allow the mind some space. Become more aware of the sensations inside the body.

- If you didn't walk in the morning, go for a brisk 30min walk in the afternoon.

- Avoid watching the news or any violent films, games or TV shows at night. Watch inspiring things on TV, get creative, listen to nourishing music, or read a good book.

- Do a session of EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) to clear any strong emotional urges or frustrations of the day (EFT is discussed in the "Techniques to Curb Cravings" Chapter).

- Eat lightly at night and go to bed before 11pm.

Does Acupuncture Help you Lose Weight?

As I'm sure you already know, there is no silver bullet to weight lose. It involves many elements working together to give results, and acupuncture can bring one of those elements to the table. Acupuncture stimulates the Qi to flow around the body. It also increases the body's capacity to heal itself, as does most natural based medicines. When the body is given the right conditions, it has an innate intelligence that works at restoring its proper function and balance.

Acupuncture works by stimulating Qi energy and blood into areas that require it, or by dissipating any excess energy that may be stored up in an area of the body that could be causing some problems. There's an incredible feeling when receiving acupuncture. It takes about 5 minutes for the acupuncturist to put the tiny needles in, and after that there is often is a buzzing sensation that can be felt throughout the body. The body becomes very relaxed and the mind becomes very calm. In fact, many people fall asleep on the table.



Many people avoid acupuncture because they believe it may hurt. There is often no pain or any uncomfortable sensation when the needles are being inserted. The needles are much smaller and are engineered differently than the needles they use in hospitals and in western medical procedures. There is a chance that the needle will give a pricking sensation on insertion, although it is usually very fast, and the sensation is similar to a mosquito bite. Most people are pleasantly surprised about how little pain or discomfort is involved in the process. So, in saying all this, I encourage you to seek treatment from a qualified acupuncturist. It is important that the Acupuncturist is trained in Chinese or Japanese acupuncture and is not simply a physiotherapist, massage therapist or Doctor who offers acupuncture. The western style of acupuncture is a very different model and I believe it to be more painful and less effective. Those trained in Chinese and Japanese acupuncture have studied it for 3 or 4 years full time and have learned it in a tradition that is thousands of years old. In the western model, physiotherapists, massage therapists and doctors often have only taken a very short course on Acupuncture.

Depending on the condition being treated with acupuncture, it will usually require a course of treatment. A course of treatment may be anywhere from 3-15 sessions to gain the full benefit. The longer the illness has been present in the body, the longer it takes to clear. If it is an acute injury or sickness you can often clear it after 1-5 sessions. I describe it to people like taking medicine, you can't take medicine once and expect it to cure the disease; you need to take the medicine as a course of treatment. Acupuncture is the same as this; consider it as taking medicine that needs to be topped up every few days until the course is over.

Chinese herbs work well also for various conditions and when taken alongside acupuncture can enhance the results. In fact any treatment or training done alongside acupuncture treatments will enhance the results a lot quicker than without it. Acupuncture gives us an energetic kick to get things moving the right direction. Some athletes and super sports people receive acupuncture to give them the edge they are looking for in a competition because it enhances their training.

Therefore in the case of weight lose, acupuncture offers us a mega boost to whatever other treatment or training we may be engaged in, as well as providing us with a nourishing surge of Chi and blood to the organs that need it most. Also, Oriental medicine doesn't just work at healing or treating sickness. In Oriental thought, they believe that we should always be working to increase our potential as a human being. We should not simply be satisfied with being 'normal' or being able to simply function within society. We should always be working towards being the best we possibly can be, in health and in life. So therefore, acupuncture as with all the practices in Taoism (Taoism is an overall philosophy of life, Chinese Medicine is like a single branch within Taoism) are to enhance the human being on all levels; physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

The Truth About Yoga and Weight Loss

The story of Yoga and weight Loss is a similar story to acupuncture and weight loss. It is not a silver bullet and therefore just provides one of the many pieces to the puzzle. The main benefits that yoga offers is strength, balance and flexibility. It helps greatly in flushing the lymphatic system, which is the system in your body that removes waste products and excess fluids.

It works on the mental plane also because of the dynamic movements and balance required, it pulls the mind into a very focused state. Therefore it is very effective at training and sharpening the mind while tonifying the body.



We don't have to be flexible to do yoga. Really!! Many people avoid it because of this reason. It's not about being flexible, it's about learning to listen and move our bodies in new ways that help us learn more about ourselves.

If you have never done yoga before I would recommend it, but be careful because there is a lot of intense yoga out there. Try a beginner's course first or a gentle yoga class. Allow your body some time to work with new postures. It's worth trying out a few studios and different teachers initially. Eventually you will find a style that just really clicks with you and when you do find it, just go for it!

The Water Myth

There is a common teaching in the mass media that one must drink 2 litres of water per day, regardless of whether one is thirsty or not. This is not an idea that I advocate and I will explain why. Firstly, everyone is different, carrying different body types with different states of organ health and therefore, there is no blanket rule to how much water a human must ingest per day.

In the case of obesity, we have already established that the meridian system and organ function is likely to be impaired, so what does this mean in the case of bringing 2 litres of water per day into the system, and cold water at that? It means we could potentially be making the situation worse. The kidneys are the main organs that have to process the water, and keep the water metabolism of the body regulated. What if they are under strain already and don't have much energy available to them to do their job effectively? It means we can't go dumping 2 litres of (cold) water on them day in, day out. It's likely they just can't handle the workload. Also, with obesity, what does an overweight person have too much of in their bodies already? Fluids. So we want to put 2 litres more fluid into an overly fluid body and expect it to loose weight? Can you see how this doesn't make any sense?

The next question to ask is, how much water to drink and how to support the kidneys?

1. Drink only when one is thirsty and drink only room temperature or warm water in small doses.

2. Focus on taking the pressure and workload off the kidneys so they can get some headway. Use kidney tonifying herbs to give them extra support and energy so they can get back up and running properly.

3. The muscles associated with the kidneys are the <u>Psoas</u> and <u>Liliaceous</u>, so we need to start moving those legs about. Work

with lunges, walking, or yoga, or ask a personal trainer how to work the Psoas muscle.

4. The emotions related to the kidney are fear and anxiety. So I would suggest, don't watch any news programs and don't read newspapers that scream fear and anxiety into the soul. Avoid scary horror movies, and instead go for uplifting movies, and uplifting stories of hope, love and creativity.

Techniques to Curb Cravings

1. EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique)

A technique that has proven very effective for thousands of people is called Emotional Freedom Technique, or EFT for short. It was developed by Dr Gary Craig, who was an engineer originally, before he became the main teacher of this health system. He discovered that if he tapped certain acupuncture points while holding in mind a stress, then it would diffuse the emotional intensity regarding that particular stress. It works because whenever we have a stressful thought, memory, or a craving, our energetic system goes into a behavioral stress mode. The thing is, every time we revisit the stressful thought, memory, or craving the energy field repeats the energetic pattern and this is why we feel overwhelmed, or it feels like we loose control. When we tap these acupuncture points to stimulate the energy field it re-organizes, stimulating it back to a more normal, balanced state. The stress essentially loses its power because the energy field is re-organized, and therefore the emotions become stable. It really is amazing stuff and very, very simple to do. It has helped me with various issues and I have seen it work on others that I have shown it to in clinic. The information about how to do it is available for free on the Internet, the main hub is here: www.garythink.com

There is a lot of information on that website and if you feel overwhelmed I have provided a simplified version of it here so you can practice right now.

Emotional Freedom Technique

1. Think of the problem or stressor and notice where in your body you feel this issue most strongly.

2. Rate the strength of that feeling on a scale from 1 - 10 with 10 being the strongest and 1 being hardly at all. Remember this because we want to see this number changing.

3. Make a statement about your problem: *"Even though I have (name the problem), I deeply and completely love and accept myself."*

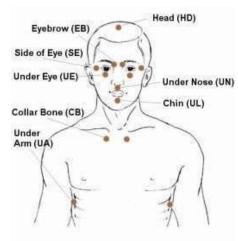
4. Repeat your statement three times while you tap your karate chop points together (this is the side of your hand below your little finger. Watch the video below to see how it's done. I just tap one hand against the other so the points on both hands are stimulated).

5. Tap the varying points on your body while you focus on your "problem."

- Top of the head
- Inside corer of the eyebrow
- Boney ridge on the outside of the eyeballs
- Above the upper lip
- Just beneath the lower lip
- In the hollow just below the collarbones

- A few inches below your armpits (bra level for women, same level as nipples for men)

- On the ribcage, just a few inches below nipples. This one is optional.



That's it! Now check your emotional intensity again – just like in steps 1 and 2. If it's still higher than you want it to be, repeat the whole process until you get the stress down to 1 or 2 out of 10. If you need more help, just check out this video on YouTube.

How to Tap YouTube Video http://youtu.be/X4EDgTc0AyQ

If you want to learn more about this be sure to read "The Promise of Energy Psychology" by psychologist David Feinstein.

2. Observation of Sensation Technique

When a feeling or craving arises within you, notice it. Notice what it feels like inside your body, and where it is inside the body, and then simply sit or lie down and watch it without reacting to it. Simply let it be there, feel it inside, but don't react to it. That's it! It usually takes about 15-20 minutes for the intensity of the feeling to dissipate and lose its hold. What is happening is that when a feeling or craving arises inside of us, it is a behavior pattern from the past that's coming up. What we usually do when we get this feeling is react to it. We fulfill the craving or fulfill the desire that it is driving us towards. This reaffirms the behavior and the reaction we have to the sensation.

The problem is that many of these behavioral habits are not actually very good for us, but they enact within us because we have programmed them in for some reason or the other. Perhaps unconsciously or during our childhood we programmed these responses into our system and now every time something gets triggered, an urge or craving arises, and we react to it, fulfill the desire as a way to release the intensity of that feeling. So when we know that, we have to work at 'un-programming' that behavior, especially when they are not good for us. How do we do that? We have to let it arise and practice not reacting to it. We can observe the sensation; the feeling, then sit down or lie down and just let it be without reacting to it. Every time we don't react to the feeling or craving it will hassle us for some time and then eventually it will lose its power, lose its energy and dissipate.

The more we practice this non-reactive behavior the weaker the craving and programming becomes. This is the case for all of our behaviours. We have the choice to keep reacting to them and keep giving them power and reaffirming them or we can not react to them,

simply observe them and let them run out in their own time. If it's a behavior that is good for us, a potentially positive behavior pattern that supports our goals (like going for a walk or going to the gym) than its potentially a good thing to keep re-affirming this behavior. After sometime, when a positive behavior is established then it will come to feel like just a normal part of the day that you accept.

3. Meditation

The primary aim of meditation is wisdom. Wisdom arises because we learn to become the witness of our minds and our behaviours instead of being engulfed by them. At some point we all need to realize that we are simply witnessing the mind and it's thinking and we are not actually the thinking itself. We are not to be identified as our thoughts or contents of our minds. This is a limitation and untrue. The thought stream is so continuous and changing, how can we claim to be our thoughts when they change so often and so much. They have no substance to them, they are like winds blowing across our awareness. There must be something else there – It's awareness. Simply put, we are awareness, a place beyond the thinking mind. The mind is a part of who we are but it is not who we are in essence.



When we sit and practice observation, we allow thoughts to arise but we don't place any importance on them and we just let them pass. Allow space to take their place. The space, the context is already there, we just don't know it because we have been busy filling it up with more and more contents. One of the best techniques or tools to work with is your breath. It's with you all the time, and its free, you don't need any special equipment or anything. What you do with your breath is you simply draw your minds attention to the entry of the nostrils and watch the breath and it enters, and watch the breath as it leaves. That is all. Just watch it come in, and watch it go out. As thoughts arise, you are likely to get distracted, it does not matter, it is natural, just acknowledge that you have been distracted and return you attention to the nostrils. That's basically it. It's the simplest technique in the book. Awareness of breath draws you into the present moment, because it is really what's happening right now. When we get caught up in thinking, we are not present anymore, we are where our mind is, and 99% of the time that is not *here*.

The fundamental thing we need to understand is that we are not our thoughts. Thoughts are just products of the mind, contents that come and go. We are something much greater than the mind, something beyond the limited constructs of the mind. Simply put, we are conscious awareness that is witnessing everything all the time. It is there whether we are conscious of it or not. We all have it. The beautiful thing is when we learn to connect with this conscious awareness by simply watching our thoughts and experiences without adding concepts or stories to everything; it opens up a space within. This space is totally peaceful and complete within itself. This is who we really are...

If you are really interested in exploring this more, than continue to practice becoming the witness of your experiences rather than being overwhelmed and caught up inside of them. Watch your thoughts come and go, you can also watch your emotions as they arise and pass. Practice non-reaction, let them come up and then let them go. The more you do this the more space and peace will come into your life. All of our addictive behaviours come from the feeling of lack in our lives; the feeling that we are lacking something and we need to fill the lack up in order to feel fulfilled. After some time we all come to realize that this lack can never be fulfilled via external things like clothes, cars, food, money, relationships etc. The fulfillment that we all seek is already lying within us. You are already complete as you are, when you go within through the practices of meditation and observation you will find this to be true.

If you want to know more about meditation than please check out my other book <u>Meditation made Simple</u>.

Conclusion

So if you have made it this far, well done! You now have a good understanding as to how TCM and Oriental medicine can provide us whole new paradigm in relation to weight loss and health. It's essentially about nature and the natural forces of life that work within us and all around us at all times. If we can simply adjust our lifestyles to be in accord with these natural forces then everything seems to take care of itself, including returning to a natural, healthy weight.

These simple teachings have been around for thousands of years and they have remained *because they work*. I have seen it in my own life and in the lives of those whom have become more aware of these natural forces at play. In truth, we have little influence or control over our lives. What we can do, though, is learn to flow with the current of potentials instead of challenging them or resisting them. Things become clearer and clearer when we learn to live in harmony with these natural forces. It may appear at first that we are giving up something, and its painful to start with, but after some time the benefits of being free of those things, those behaviours, opens us up to a higher potential. We must be willing to let go of who we think we are, only then can we become who we really are.

Here is a quick summery of the main points discussed within this book:

- Supporting and cultivating the energy field will automatically help you to increase energy, improve digestion and lose weight. You can do this by generally avoiding those things that put stress on your energy field.

- Restoring and stimulating organ function is the most important thing to focus on.

- Breathing through the nose and sitting with your knees slightly lower than your hips will help with improving posture and energy levels.

- The 5 elements work together and govern the health of your energy, organs and psychology.

- Focus on The Fire element, Wood element and Earth element when treating obesity (Tonify the Stomach and Spleen - Remove phlegm from the system - Add more warmth and fire to the belly to increase metabolism - Remove energy stagnation and detox the liver)

- Adding key herbs and supplements will stimulate organ function.

- Activating the muscles primarily in the back of the body will improve digestion and support the elimination of toxins.

- Acupuncture and yoga will give you a good kick in the right direction.

- Don't drink water in excess.

- Use EFT, Observation or meditation to curb cravings.

I sincerely hope that this book has provided you with some further insight and that it helps you achieve your weight loss goals. Please feel free to leave a review for this book from where you purchased it, as this will help others who are looking for similar information and it will also help me to become a better writer.

~ May all being be happy! ~

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