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## Rest, Renew and Reflect on Your Health!

***By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest. ~ Confucius***

Reflection is the process in which an image or idea comes back to us, such as looking in a mirror, rethinking an event, or reviewing an idea. We have the opportunity to take a closer view and reconsider our original thinking.



The new year is a perfect opportunity to reflect and use that knowledge as a catalyst for change. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help achieve the change you seek as it assists in illness prevention, stress relief, minimizes aches and pains, improves energy and you find yourself in better balance. This calm and clarity strengthens your resolve as you start the new year with new goals.

Reflection has other connotations in acupuncture and Oriental medicine. Outer appearances reflect inner health so a well trained practitioner of acupuncture and oriental medicine will observe very different aspects of your appearance than you typically study when you look in the mirror. In acupuncture and oriental medicine, bodily observation includes looking at the face, eyes, body type, demeanor, and tongue. Two thousand years ago, when acupuncture and Oriental medicine was in its infancy, there were no x-ray machines or the very sophisticated magnetic imaging of today. These healers and diagnosticians depended on their finely tuned observational skills in order to assess their patients. Some of those early ideas seem simplistic today but many elements of diagnosis persist because outer appearances do provide clues to a person's health.

### Stick Out Your Tongue

Oriental medicine has used tongue diagnosis for thousands of years. An experienced practitioner can look at your tongue and begin to understand your internal problems but you can also be aware of information that your tongue provides. Look for changes in the color of your tongue, teeth marks, shape, and coating. These changes may indicate that something is amiss. A healthy tongue is naturally the same pink-red color as your lips. Someone who is very stressed or irritable may have a tongue with a red tip and sides. Teeth marks may indicate a deficiency or insomnia. Note any changes in the shape of your tongue. If it's too pale, puffy or red it may indicate an imbalance.

Healthy tongues have a thin white coating. If you see a thicker coating developing, you may be catching a cold or flu. If the coating appears yellowish the illness has a hotter nature and you can also expect a sore throat and yellow phlegm. If the coating is thick and white, this indicates a cold with chills and clear/white phlegm but without a sore throat. So if you see a thick coat developing take precautions, rest, sleep more, and keep warm.

**Seasonal acupuncture treatments serve to nurture and nourish your kidney Qi which can greatly enhance the body's ability to thrive in times of stress and aid in healing, preventing illness and increasing vitality. Call for your appointment today and let us help you prepare for the year ahead!**

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## Energy Renewing Ear Massage

Ear Massage is an extremely relaxing and effective therapy aimed at reducing stress, promoting wellbeing and addressing various health issues. It can be enjoyed by all and promotes a deep sense of peace and tranquility.

Ear massage triggers the release of the body's natural painkillers, endorphins. Studies have demonstrated that ear stimulation increases levels of endorphins in both the blood and cerebrospinal fluid.

Ear acupuncture is used throughout the world to calm anxiety, manage pain, reduce substance cravings and assist in the detoxification of addictive substances.

Here is a great ear massage that you can do for yourself or your loved ones:

1. Rub in small circular motions with your thumbs inside the widest upper part inside the ears, holding them from outside with the index and middle fingers.

## Difficulties Sleeping? Resolve to Put Insomnia to Rest!

Our society puts a premium on our waking hours and has the tendency to underestimate the importance of a full-night's sleep. Often, good sleep hygiene is an afterthought for many people. Millions of people are besieged with insomnia and look for quick fixes instead of exploring the root causes of the problem.

Evening is a time to allow our minds and bodies to turn inward to our subconscious. Excessive lighting at night, evening shift work, evening computing, video games, television and late-night eating all serve to counteract the body's natural rhythms. It's no wonder people have trouble sleeping. Exposure to early morning light and dusk helps to regulate sleep hormones in the body. Rather than embrace nighttime we tend to let our minds wander from one element of stress to another keeping us up for hours or perhaps an entire evening. We are then forced to approach the new day without having benefited from the regenerative powers that night time brings.

In Oriental medicine sleep occurs when the yang energy of the day folds into Yin - nighttime. Yin energy of the body is cooling and restorative. It is the time of day when our bodies turn inward and regenerate. This is the time we dream and explore the caverns of our unconscious mind. Conversely, daytime is yang, which is expansive. We expend the energy we have built up from the process of sleeping. Together, this is the cycle of yin and yang.

To apply the concept of yin and yang to your everyday life try eating your last meal at least three hours before going to bed. If you are a hot excess type, you can cool your body down by avoiding hot and spicy food and drink. Avoid alcohol, coffee, chocolate any other stimulants, especially late in the day.

Help circulate your body's energy by working out or by gentle exercising. Build your body's nutritive aspect by eating marrow based soups and stews, dark pigmented vegetables and fruits. Avoid overworking or over rumination as well.

Meditation is an invaluable tool to help your brain unwind. Helping the body create a sense of calm meditation can reduce stress, increase feelings of well-being, and improve overall health. It is of specific use to help one increase alertness, relaxation and reflection even in "waking" states. Meditation is best practiced during the day to help ease your sleep patterns at night.

One contributor to insomnia, stress, weakens the function of the liver, which in turn affects the health of your nerves. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine have a calming effect on the nervous system clearing obstructions in the muscle and nerve channels, assisting the flow of oxygen-enriched energy and relaxing the system. Common noted benefits include deeper breathing, improved digestive abilities, better sleeping patterns, and a general sense of well being.

**If you or someone you know has insomnia or are having difficulties getting a restful sleep call for your appointment today!**

2. Use your index finger to massage inside the smaller crevices if your thumbs don't fit and along the front of your ear where it attaches to the head.

3. Lastly, massage the earlobes by gently pulling them down and also making circles with your thumb and index finger.

## Tips for a Restful Night



Practicing good sleep hygiene and keeping your body in sync with the rhythm of day and night can help your body cope with sleep deprivation give it an opportunity to get stronger and heal.

By implementing just a few of the suggestions you should notice a great improvement in your sleep and how you function in the daylight hours.

- Maintain a routine sleep schedule
- Make your bedroom a sanctuary. Keep it dark, cool, and quiet
- Establish a sense of safety with your surroundings
- Reduce nicotine, caffeine and alcohol use
- Avoid rigorous exercise 3-5 hours prior to bedtime
- Avoid heavy meals near bedtime
- Position clock away from the bed
- Limit television and computer use to early evening

## Osteoporosis - Part II

Hello everyone,

U.S. sales of osteoporosis drugs, in 2010, are estimated at over \$8 billion! These drugs, known as biphosphonates, act by poisoning the osteoclasts in bone tissue. Osteoclasts are the bone cells that scavenge old, brittle bone tissue, ensuring that the bones stay dense and strong. They help the bones regenerate. When the osteoclasts die off, you are left with more bone, but it is also more fragile and weak. In the long run this increases your risk of fracture. Biphosphonates do NOT build new bone. These drugs also stay in your bones indefinitely and disrupt the normal bone regeneration process, which is why you are more prone to fracture.

Biphosphonates can cause other problems as well. There is clear evidence of jaw bone necrosis or jaw bone death. This class of drugs is also linked to an increased risk of esophageal cancer, possible blindness, liver damage, heart arrhythmias, ulcers, kidney failure and skin reactions. There is a growing body of evidence that biphosphonates can cause spontaneous bone fractures, even without trauma or a fall.

Recently this class of drugs is being used to treat osteopenia, which is a natural thinning of the bones as we age, even though no conclusive benefit has been found. I think it would be healthier and smarter to treat the cause of osteoporosis and not the symptoms. Osteoporosis is not a biphosphonate deficiency and taking these drugs only seems to worsen the condition. So what does one do?

Bone is made up of many nutrients other than calcium and vitamin D, such as phosphorus, magnesium, potassium, sodium, chromium, iron, boron, zinc, copper, manganese, iodine, and strontium. Additionally vitamin K is needed to form bone collagen and it helps complete the bone building effects of vitamin D. Low levels of B vitamins may likely to lead to osteoporosis and fractures. Fats, both saturated and unsaturated play multiple roles in bone structure and function.

Here are some drug-free steps you can take to improve bone health:

1. Increase your consumption of vegetables, especially the cruciferous ones like kale, cauliflower, broccoli, brussel sprouts, bok choi.
2. Avoid processed foods. These so-called "foods" are denatured and ultimately rob your body of vital nutrients. Sodas and sugar especially deplete your bones of calcium.
3. Eat a healthy balance of Omega 3 and Omega 6 fats. Especially reduce or eliminate processed vegetable oils like canola, corn, safflower, and soy. A good source of Omega 3s is fish oil. Most Americans consume too much vegetable oil. These oils contain large amounts of Omega 6 fatty acids, which cause inflammation and are connected to all sorts of health issues besides bone health.
4. EXERCISE!!! Weight bearing exercise in particular is known to support healthy bones.
5. Get some sun! Most of us are sun-phobic because of fears of skin cancer. Yet some sun is absolutely healthy and necessary.
6. Also consider supplementing with Vitamin D, especially during the fall and winter. The new guidelines suggest 600 IUs per day. You may want to have your blood tested for vitamin D levels. The better blood test for overall vitamin D status is called 25-hydroxyvitamin D ( 25 (OH) D ). If your blood levels are low (below 50ng/ml.), supplement with 2-6,000 IUs per day for several months, then re-check blood levels. The optimal range should be 50-70 ng./ml. If you supplement, use the D-3 form called cholecalciferol. Good food sources are eggs, organ meats, animal fat, cod liver oil, and fish.

7. Be sure to eat plenty of high quality protein from pastured eggs and meat. Protein contains many amino acids that are crucial to building strong bone tissue.

8. Eat sea salt. Sea salt contains a variety of trace minerals responsible for catalyzing many important functions in our bodies, and they help build strong bones. Trace minerals are seriously lacking in our topsoil and, therefore, our food.

9. Uncontaminated, raw bone meal is also a good source of bone building nutrients, including protein and minerals. Make sure it's raw (cooking it kills a lot of the nutrition) and from grass fed, pastured animals.

What you eat affects your bones. Consuming nutrient rich vegetables, fruits, fish, nuts and seeds, pastured eggs and meat, raw dairy ( if tolerated) and good oils (olive oil, butter, coconut and palm oils) is protective, while processed foods, sugars, and too many polyunsaturated vegetable oils is harmful. Getting outside and exercising is wonderfully healthy on many levels. Choose a form of activity you enjoy. These steps will go a long way to help protect your bone health!

Happy New Year!

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