



TAO OF WELLNESS

ACUPUNCTURE
CHINESE MEDICINE
NUTRITION

WELLNESS NEWSLETTER



ANNOUNCEMENTS

May 6 – Feng Shui Consultant Certification course with Dr. Mao, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. at Yo San University.

May 9 – Dr. Mao speaks at Los Angeles Public Library Docents Spring Luncheon.

May 20 – Dr. Mao teaches workshop on *Achieving Ultimate Mind Health* at Northwestern Health Sciences University in Minnesota, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

May 24 – J. Matthew Brand, L.Ac. and Dr. Mao host a free webinar on *Acupuncture and Pain Relief*, 5 - 6 p.m.

April 25 – Albert Vaca, L.Ac. hosted a webinar on “Fertility East meets West” with Dr. Brad Kolb of Huntington Reproductive Center on integrative fertility practices.

CLASSES

CHI GONG MEDITATION FOR CANCER SUPPORT

2121 Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica, 90404
Join cancer patients and their caregivers for this free class every Monday from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at St. John's Health Center in Santa Monica. Parking will be validated. RSVP to Ana Rocha: survivorshipsaintjohns@providence.org; 310.829.8621.

ONGOING MIND-BODY CHI CLASS

Tuesdays at Tao of Wellness Santa Monica

Harmony Tai Chi starts Tuesday, NEW
May 1, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m., Cost: \$60 per month, or drop-in single class, \$18, space permitting. Sign up early to secure your space at 310.917.2200 or frontdesk@taoofwellness.com.

TAO OF WELLNESS SANTA MONICA
Tel 310.917.2200 | santamonica@taoofwellness.com

TAO OF WELLNESS NEWPORT BEACH
Tel 949.706.7770 | newportbeach@taoofwellness.com

TAO OF WELLNESS PASADENA
Tel 626.397.1000 | pasadena@taoofwellness.com

www.taoofwellness.com

TOP 3 STRATEGIES TO ELIMINATE BACK PAIN

Albert Vaca, L.Ac.



Back pain can seriously impact your quality of life and limit your activities of daily living. Just the simple act of getting out of bed can cause pain and discomfort that takes not only a physical toll, but an emotional one as well.

The American College of Physicians recommends that physicians and patients treat acute or subacute low back pain with non-drug therapies such as massage, heat and acupuncture. Chronic pain can be treated similarly along with the addition of exercise, meditation and Tai Chi.

Too many people are being prescribed opioid drugs for their pain, which can easily lead to dependence and addiction. Recent studies on the effectiveness of these drugs have shown little relief with long-term use and even increased pain after a 12-month period.

Here are my top three strategies to eliminate back pain naturally and keep it from coming back.

Feed your aching muscles

When a back injury occurs, blood vessels may be damaged along with muscles, tendons and ligaments. The result is inflammation that can stimulate nerves and cause stagnant blood and body fluid.

I suggest that you fill yourself up with foods that are known to fight inflammation.

Papaya and pineapple are among the best fruits you can eat because their enzymes can help reduce pain and inflammation. Turmeric, ginger, red and blue berries, high-quality fish and lots of delicious vegetables are all known to help reduce inflammation. Minimizing, or better yet, excluding altogether, coffee, dairy foods, alcohol and sugar is especially beneficial.

Stretch to find your flow

I find it very common that patients with sedentary lifestyles—people who sit too long and don't move enough—have tight hip flexors and weak glute muscles. This creates a perfect storm of muscle imbalance that fortunately can be helped with some simple stretches. Targeted stretches for these muscles, such as lunges, pigeon, cat/cow, McKenzie exercises and light twists can be beneficial. Our Chi Gong for Back Pain classes (call for class information) are gentle enough for anyone to participate. Don't forget to incorporate breathwork into your stretches! Discuss with your practitioner which movements may be the best for you. The point is to get up, move and give your body the attention it deserves.

“Where there is flow, there is no pain. Where there is no flow, there is pain.”

This statement from Chinese medicine is useful to consider in deciding if you need to apply ice or heat to an affected area. Use a heating pad to increase circulation in painful areas, especially where achy, stiff muscles and joints are involved.

There has been some debate about this, but here's a simple explanation. Use ice during the first 24 to 48 hours after an injury or if there is prolonged swelling with redness. Heat increases blood flow and helps to soften muscles, whereas ice packs slow down circulation.

At Tao of Wellness we can help you determine your best course of action, based upon your diagnosis, and can recommend a duration of treatment. Treatment may also include fine needles to help your muscles relax, hasten elimination of inflammation and improve blood circulation so you can get back to doing the activities you love. ■



FIVE ELEMENTS HOROSCOPE:

Get ready to fire up life! The year started intensely and then last month it turned the complete opposite. Now that you know you can handle continuous change, it's time for a spring refresh. Emphasize diet and exercise to feel your physical best. Enjoy this period of sensuality as a time in which to connect deeper with your current partner or magnetize a new partner. Take pleasure in the process of earning, minimize expenses and cultivate accountability for your financial actions. Act with grace and be the one to give to others first. Remember what you put out into the universe is what you receive back. Let this month bloom with possibilities!!! Learn how your personal element can take you the next step towards happiness and fulfillment this month and every month for your emotions, health, relationships, career and finances at Infinichi.com.

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TREATING PAIN WITH TCM

Frances Lam, L.Ac.



All of us have suffered from pain in one form or another. Whether it's the result of an injury such as a sprain or fracture, headaches, menstrual cramps, nerve pain, toxemia, or even a burn, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) can help to ease and soothe it away.

"I think the benefit of acupuncture is clear, and the complications and potential adverse effects of acupuncture are low compared with medication," says Dr. Lucy Chen, a board-certified anesthesiologist, specialist in pain medicine, and practicing acupuncturist at Harvard-affiliated Massachusetts General Hospital.

Pain can be complex, activating nerves, the spinal cord and the brain to interact with one another in alerting the body to stop what we are doing in order to lessen the pain sensation. It can be both physical and emotional. How you react to pain depends on what's causing it as well as many personal factors.

In TCM, acupuncture, herbs, Tuina massage, and dietary changes can all be used to reduce and manage pain. Pain is viewed as an impediment, blocking the free flow of qi (vital energy) and blood, causing qi and blood stagnation and deficiency.

Studies have shown that acupuncture reduces pain by stimulating neurotransmitters, hormones or the immune system. Acupuncture can also help to release endorphins, which are the body's own pain-killing chemicals.

TCM is gaining more attention because it provides safe, effective treatment methods for many conditions, and especially for pain. Discuss with your practitioner at the Tao of Wellness how you can develop a treatment plan to experience less pain with any condition you experience and feel more energized and balanced in your life. ■

A ROLE FOR TCM IN ADDICTION RECOVERY

J. Matthew Brand, L.Ac.



According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, addiction is defined as "a chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences. It is considered a brain disease because drugs change the brain—they change its structure and how it works." The euphoria experienced when using certain drugs, including opioids, reduces the body's natural ability to generate endogenous endorphins, thereby causing increased reliance upon the user's drug of choice.

There are myriad risk factors that can increase the chances that anyone takes when starting and continuing to take drugs, beyond the point of trying to feel better. Consequently, treatment for addiction necessarily employs a variety of methods—including behavioral and psychiatric therapies—and also entails debilitating withdrawal symptoms that inevitably arise when trying to make a change for the better. Such withdrawal symptoms can include depression, anxiety and insomnia.

Acupuncture has been incorporated into many addiction treatment facilities across the country due to its efficacy in helping with drug addiction recovery. The National Acupuncture Detoxification Association (NADA) protocol is one of the most well-known acupuncture techniques used around the world, and has gained respect with the mounting evidence of its efficacy. That said, acupuncture alone may not reduce usage rates of all illicit substances, but it can play an important role in contributing to the reduction of withdrawal symptoms, which ultimately means reduction in rates of returning to substance use.

Traditional Chinese Medicine works with many tools in addition to acupuncture, making it much more capable of addressing drug addiction in a comprehensive way. At Tao of Wellness, we use our own detoxification program to help with withdrawal; Infinichi coaching to address psychosocial matters from a Taoist perspective; and herbal medicine and nutritional consultation to help restore balance in body and mind. ■

NUTRITION CORNER WITH SOEON PARK, L.AC.



The foods that we eat can influence the amount of pain that we feel. To reduce pain and inflammation, nutritional therapy in TCM recommends avoiding "damp" foods such as greasy, sweet and spicy foods, as well as dairy products.

Helpful foods to consider adding to your diet include:

GINGER: A natural anti-inflammatory. Make a tea with half a teaspoon of grated fresh ginger root and eight ounces of boiling water. Steep for 10 to 15 minutes.

PINEAPPLE: Bromelain, an enzyme in pineapple, reduces inflammation.

CHERRIES: Cherries are an excellent source of nutrients that may help to reduce joint pain and inflammation related to arthritis.

FISH: Cold-water fish such as salmon and mackerel contain omega-3 fatty acids, which help reduce pain and swelling as well as keep joints healthy.

TURMERIC: A natural anti-inflammatory. Take according to the supplement label and use as a cooking spice and tea whenever possible. ■

