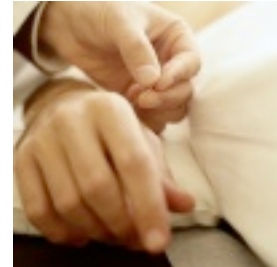


# New Year's Rejuvenation

It is the beginning of a new year and, once again, a time to reflect on what changes we can make to improve our lives.

If you are intent on improving your health this year, acupuncture may be the very thing you need to "stick" to those resolutions. Here's how:



## Resolution: Stay Sharp

Your New Year's resolution may be to learn a new language or take a class at the local college. However you choose to exercise your brain, acupuncture can help. Numerous studies suggest that acupuncture can help improve memory, mental clarity, concentration and cognitive function.

One recently published study showed how acupuncture can be used to help patients with vascular dementia. Cerebral functional imaging before and after acupuncture treatments showed a significant increase in the cerebral glucose metabolism of the brain which is associated with improved cognitive function. Other studies have looked at how acupuncture affects the performance of student taking an exam, Alzheimer's disease and memory impairment induced by diabetes and cerebral ischemia. All results, thus far, have been positive.

## Resolution: Relieve Pain Naturally

Increasingly, people are looking for more natural approaches to help relieve painful conditions instead of relying on medications. Acupuncture has no side effects and can be helpful for all types of pain, regardless of what is causing the pain or where the pain is located. Some studies have shown the pain relief it provides can last for months.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the brain before and after acupuncture treatment for pain shows dramatic decreases in brain activity -- up to 70%. This decrease in brain activity in certain areas of the brain is thought to be the reason for the reduction of pain caused by the acupuncture treatments.

In addition to reducing pain, acupuncture also hastens the healing process by increasing circulation and attracting white blood cells to an injured area.

## Resolution: Eliminate Stress

Stress reduction is always on the top ten list for New Year's resolutions and for a good reason. Stress is often the cause of illness and the deterioration of health. Numerous studies have demonstrated the substantial benefits of acupuncture in the treatment of stress, anxiety and lowering blood pressure

In addition to acupuncture, Oriental medicine offers a whole gamut of tools and techniques that can be integrated into your life to keep stress in check. These tools include Tui Na, Qi Gong exercises, herbal medicine, dietary therapy, meditations and acupressure that you can administer at home.

Needless to say, if the stress in your life is throwing you off balance, consider coming in for a treatment to regain peace of mind and stay healthy.

### **Resolution: Reach Target Weight and Stay There**

Losing weight is the #1 most common New Year's Resolution. Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine can help you reach your goal weight and maintain it by promoting better digestion, soothing emotions, reducing appetite, improving metabolism, and eliminating food cravings.

From an Oriental medicine perspective, the acupuncture points, foods and herbs that are chosen to assist with weight loss directly influence the Qi of the Spleen and Liver systems to treat the root imbalances that are causing the weight gain.

From a Western perspective, acupuncture and Oriental medicine have been shown to have an effect on the function of the nervous system, endocrine system, digestive system, food cravings, and metabolism. All of which can help to energize the body, maximize the absorption of nutrients, regulate elimination, control overeating, suppress the appetite, and reduce anxiety.

The beauty of acupuncture is that each treatment is catered to the needs of the individual patient. Acupuncture points on the body will be chosen for overall well being with the objective of increasing circulation of the blood and Qi (stimulating the metabolism) and calming the nervous system.

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine are powerful tools for healthy weight loss, by themselves or as a supportive treatment in conjunction with other weight management programs.

### **Resolution: Quit Smoking**

Acupuncture has turned a growing number of cigarette cravers into permanent ex-smokers. In fact, researchers say that acupuncture is a promising treatment for all types of addiction from cigarettes to heroin.

In one study, a team from Yale University successfully used auricular (ear) acupuncture to treat cocaine addiction. Results showed that 54.8% of participants tested free of cocaine during the last week of treatment, compared to 23.5% and 9.1% in the two control groups. Those who completed acupuncture treatment also had longer periods of sustained abstinence compared to participants in the control groups.

The acupuncture treatments for smoking cessation focus on jitters, cravings, irritability, and restlessness; symptoms that people commonly complain about when they quit. It also aids in relaxation and detoxification.

## **The Will Power Connection**

**Is there a body/mind connection to will power? According to the principles of Oriental medicine, there is. Will power or “Zhi” is said to reside in the Kidneys and the state of the Kidney Qi directly correlates to the fortitude of our will power.**

“The Kidneys determine our will power,” writes Giovanni Maciocia, the author of *The Foundations of Chinese Medicine*. “If the Kidneys are strong, the will power will be strong, the mind will be focused on goals that it sets itself and it will pursue them in a single-minded way. Conversely, if the Kidneys are weak, will power will be lacking and the mind will be easily discouraged and swayed from its aims.”

## **Looking for ways to reduce your chance of getting flu this season?**

A study, published by *The American Physiological Society* found that mice were significantly less likely to contract flu when given *quercetin*, a powerful anti-oxidant found in a variety of fruits and vegetables.

According to the study's authors, the research also indicated that high consumption of *quercetin* resulted in catching fewer colds.

So, what are the best *quercetin* rich foods that you can load up on? *Quercetin* is found in red onions, grapes, blueberries, tea, broccoli and red wine. Red onions are one of the best *quercetin* rich foods as they have approximately four times the *quercetin* of most other produce. Eat them raw or cooked.

*Source: American Journal of Physiology*

Jade windscreen tea is a tonic made up of three herbs that are used to enhance the immune system. This herbal combination is thought to improve resistance to colds and flu, strengthen the lungs, and help to balance the body during periods of stress.

### **Ingredients**

To make Jade Windscreen Tea, you will need equal parts (2–3 oz. each) of the herbs listed below.

- 1.) Huang Qi (Astragalus root)
- 2.) Bai Zhu (Atractylodes)
- 3.) Fang Feng (Ledebouriella Root)

### **Directions**

Boil and Simmer. Place one part herbs and four parts water in a large stockpot. Bring the water to a rolling boil. Turn the heat down to a low simmer and cover. Do not lift the lid to look at the herbs too often, as this will diminish the “flavor” and allow the volatile oils to evaporate out of the tea very easily. Cook the herbs for 30 to 45 minutes.



Strain the Tea and Drink. Using a slotted spoon, remove the herbs from the pot and allow the soup to cool. Pour the tea into a mug or thermos and sip it throughout the day. Two cups a day, taken with a slice of fresh ginger, is recommended through the cold and flu season.

The tea has a slightly bitter taste. Water down the tea or add a natural sweetener such as honey if you find the taste disagreeable.

**As with all herbal medicine, please consult with your practitioner to determine if this is the best formula for you.**