


Acupuncture

To best understand how Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine work, it is first necessary to become familiar with some of the concepts on which they are based. An integral part of Chinese Medicine is the concept of Qi (pronounced Chee). Qi is often referred to as energy or life force, but in reality it is much more than this. Qi cannot be measured but without it we could not exist. Qi not only gives us life, but also causes the tide to come in and go out, the sun to rise and set and the seasons to follow their natural cycle. At the same time Qi provides us with the ability to move and grow, it is also inseparable from that movement and growth. This is often a difficult concept for many Westerners, with our very linear thinking, to grasp.

The second is the concept of Yin and Yang. In the West, people tend to see Yin and Yang simply as opposites. The reality is somewhat more complex than this. Yin and Yang can only exist as relative to each other - without one the other could not exist - and they may easily change from one to the other. The example of Yin and Yang in the classics is usually given as the shady and the sunny side of a hill. As the sun rises, the eastern slope is considered Yang and the western side Yin, but as the sun moves across the sky the eastern side becomes Yin and the western side yang. Same hill, different perspective.

Most people have seen the pictures or models of the acupuncture meridian system. These meridians, or channels, cannot be seen on the body but are considered in Chinese medicine to be just as real as the blood vessels or nerve pathways as recognised in Western medicine. It is along these channels that Qi flows - nourishing the body and allowing it to function smoothly and efficiently. Each of the channels is associated with a specific organ of the body and at some point along its pathway will connect with that organ. Any disruption or blockage of the flow of Qi along the meridians will in time affect the associated organ, resulting, for example, in decreased function or pain. Acupuncture aims to correct this flow of Qi, and thereby restore the balance within the body. Different points along these channels have different specific functions

- some points promote the movement of Qi up or down in the body, some cool, some warm, others harmonize or balance.

A diagram of the human body showing the twelve meridians of Chinese medicine. The meridians are represented by lines connecting specific points on the body. The diagram is oriented with the head at the top and the feet at the bottom. The meridians are color-coded: Lung (blue), Large Intestine (red), Stomach (yellow), Spleen (green), Heart (purple), Small Intestine (pink), Bladder (brown), Kidney (grey), Pericardium (light blue), Triple Burner (light green), Gallbladder (light yellow), and Liver (light purple).

In more recent times, in terms of Western Medicine, rigorous scientific research has confirmed that acupuncture promotes the production of a variety of chemical substances in the body. These help relieve pain and relax muscles, help regulate nerve transmission, enhance the immune system, regulate hormones and blood flow and reduce inflammation.

- Not everything that counts can be measured. Not everything that can be measured counts.

Albert Einstein