



KATIE BRINDLE

Exhaustion Guide

Treatment techniques based in Chinese medicine



Overview

Exhaustion, also known as fatigue or burnout, is a common condition that can significantly impact our physical and mental wellbeing. In Chinese medicine, Exhaustion, known as “Qi Deficiency”, is viewed as a result of imbalances or disharmonies within the body’s key organ and energy systems. Prioritising the restoration and balance of these deficiencies through Yang Sheng techniques, including mind and body practices, acupressure and diet therapy, is key to ensuring Exhaustion does not gain a lasting hold, manifesting into more serious concerns.

Causes

- Qi Deficiency: This is the most prevalent cause of Exhaustion, arising from poor nutrition, overwork, excessive mental or physical strain, or being too sedentary. Chronic emotional stress, such as worry, anxiety, grief or illness, can result in poor sleep, which can then lead to inadequate energy for the body to function efficiently.
- Blood Deficiency: Insufficient blood production due to poor nutrition or, on occasion, excessive blood loss can lead to a lack of nourishment to the organs, which can result in hormonal imbalances and fatigue.
- Yin or Yang Deficiency: Imbalances in the Yin/Yang axis can result in physical and mental Exhaustion, with Yin deficiency manifesting as concerns such as restlessness, night sweating, dryness, dizziness or Tinnitus, whilst Yang deficiency might present as cold limbs, low energy, slow metabolism or breathlessness.
- Dampness and Phlegm: Spleen imbalances, resulting from poor diet, compromised Wei Qi and an impaired digestive system can obstruct Qi flow, to Exhaustion.

@katie_brindle

katiebrindle.com

info@katiebrindle.com



Organs Implicated

- Spleen: Central to digestion and Qi production, the Spleen is responsible for transforming food and nutrients into Qi and blood. Weakness or imbalances in the Spleen can lead to poor digestion, impaired immunity and Exhaustion.
- Liver: Our Liver is responsible for the smooth flow of Qi, blood and emotions throughout the body. Liver Qi stagnation or imbalances can block this smooth energy flow, leading to Exhaustion and its resultant symptoms of irritability, mood swings, and disrupted sleep.
- Kidneys: Overseeing the body's reserves of energy and essential essence (Jing), poor lifestyle habits such as overwork, stress and lack of sufficient rest can severely deplete Kidney Qi, leading to concerns such as chronic fatigue, low libido, and weak lower back and knees.
- Heart: The Heart plays a vital role in Exhaustion as it governs the mind, houses the Shen (the Spirit), regulates blood circulation and, largely, controls peaceful sleep. Disharmonies within the Heart Qi can lead to symptoms such as insomnia, palpitations and restlessness, further contributing to feelings of fatigue and tiredness. The Heart's role in regulating emotional and mental wellbeing is, therefore, essential in maintaining overall energy levels and alleviating and preventing fatigue.
- Lungs: Maintaining Lung health is key to preventing and alleviating Exhaustion. As the Lungs are associated with distributing Qi throughout the body, when compromised, it can lead to a deficiency in Qi distribution, resulting in symptoms of fatigue and Exhaustion as well as a reduced immune function, making the body more susceptible to fatigue-inducing illnesses.

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info@katiebrindle.com



Emotions

Chronic emotional stress can severely disrupt the flow of qi in the body. Each organ has specific negative emotions attached to it which, if left unresolved, can manifest as physical problems:

- Spleen: Imbalances in the Spleen Qi, such as excessive worry, can disrupt digestion and Qi production, causing mind and body to experience fatigue.
- Liver: Feelings of anger or frustration, if left unchecked, will result in Liver Qi stagnation, blocking energy flow and preventing restorative sleep and detoxification of the body, which will worsen existing feelings of Exhaustion.
- Kidneys: Fear, the overriding negative emotion of the Kidneys, can potentially have a stultifying effect on energy reserves, which can cause extreme fatigue.
- Heart and Lungs: Sadness and grief, the negative emotions of the Heart and Lungs, can grip mind and body, causing the free flow of blood and Qi to be blocked, resulting in weakness, lethargy and, ultimately, chronic Exhaustion.

@katie_brindle

katiebrindle.com

info@katiebrindle.com



Acupressure

Acupressure is a technique that can easily be performed as part of your self-care practices. Gentle pressure is applied to specific points on the body with fingers or an acupressure tool to help clear blockages in the meridians, the pathways of the body through which qi flows.

ST-36 (Zúsānlǐ)

Location: This point is found on the leg, four finger widths down from the bottom of the kneecap, one finger width outside of the shinbone.

Why: A major point for strengthening Qi and blood, stimulating ST-36 helps to boost energy levels, improve digestive strength, crucial for generating Qi from food, and enhance overall vitality. This makes it particularly effective for combating fatigue and weakness, especially when these are due to Spleen and Stomach Qi deficiency.

SP-6 (Sānyīnjiāo)

Location: This point is located on the inner side of the lower leg. To find it, place four fingers above your inner ankle bone. The point lies just behind the shin bone (tibia), in a tender area often found just above the highest peak of the inner ankle bone.

Why: SP-6 is a meeting point of the Spleen, Liver, and Kidney meridians, making it very effective in harmonising digestive weaknesses, emotional stress and hormonal or reproductive issues. As these meridians are fundamental to the production and regulation of Qi, blood, and Yin/Yang balance, stimulating this point can be very helpful in alleviate fatigue and Exhaustion.

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info@katiebrindle.com



KID-3 (Tàixī)

Location: This point is located on the inner side of the foot. Find the highest point of the inner ankle, and then slide your finger down into the depression between the ankle bone and the Achilles tendon.

Why: KID-3 is a vital point for nourishing Kidney energy, which in Chinese Medicine is the root of all energy in the body. The Kidneys store the body's essential energy reserves, so any imbalances in Kidney Qi can lead to chronic fatigue and a general lack of vitality. Stimulating this point can help to fortify Kidney Qi and Yin, which can be particularly helpful in cases of Exhaustion due to overwork, stress, chronic illness or lack of sufficient rest.

LU-9 (Tàiyuān)

Location: Found at the wrist crease, below the thumb, in line with the radial artery.

Why: A key point for strengthening Lung Qi. The Lungs are responsible for distributing Qi throughout the body, therefore weak Lung Qi can lead to fatigue, shortness of breath and a weakened immune system. Stimulating LU-9 can help to enhance the Lung's function of gathering and distributing Qi, improving overall energy levels and boosting immunity.

@katie_brindle

katiebrindle.com

info@katiebrindle.com



Yang Sheng Practices

There are many practices, lifestyle choices, self-care tools and supplements that can be used to help manage the symptoms and the root cause of Exhaustion, including:

- Qigong: This gentle exercise, combining movement, breath and meditation will help to regulate the flow of Qi in the body, reduce stress and balance Yin and Yang energies to maintain energy and vitality. Regular practice will support overall health and alleviate Exhaustion, leaving you relaxed, yet energised.
- Diet Therapy: Eat nourishing, seasonal and good quality foods that support the Spleen and Stomach, the primary organs for digestion and transforming foods and nutrients into energy. Aim for simply prepared, warming and easily digested meals, limiting anything overly spicy or greasy and avoiding the "4 Whites" as much as possible: Dairy, Flour, Salt and Sugar. Never have ice in drinks or consume foods straight from the fridge as this will be an added burden on the digestive system. Supporting the body in this way will ensure good quality Qi and blood production, help to prevent Qi stagnation, and avoid the formation of dampness and phlegm, which are key considerations in the management of Exhaustion.
- Rest: Sleep is when the body repairs itself; it is essential for rejuvenating the body's Qi and avoiding deficiency. Ideally be asleep before 11pm, the most active time for the Liver, so that the organ is able to efficiently detoxify, ensuring toxins that might otherwise hamper the smooth flow of Qi and blood, are removed. Good sleep hygiene, such as having a cool, dark room, ideally with a window open, limiting screen time before bed and avoiding eating too close to bedtime will be additional support in ensuring good quality and adequate sleep, which is paramount if Exhaustion is a concern.

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katiebrindle.com

info@katiebrindle.com



- Tapping: Tapping all over the body, with a bamboo tapper or a loosely clenched fist, will help to release stagnant Qi. It will also relieve tension and promote the healthy flow of Qi and blood whilst alleviating any muscle stiffness or lethargy, which can often be a symptom of Exhaustion. During the day tap all over the body at regular intervals – just one minute will give body and mind a boost, raising energy levels whilst promoting relaxation, essential for those with a sedentary lifestyle. Before bed it is helpful to gently and slowly tap the body, which will release accumulated heat and stress and prepare for restorative sleep so that energy can be restored for the coming day.
- Lifestyle Balance: Maintaining a healthy work-life balance, setting boundaries and engaging in activities that bring joy and relaxation will be crucial in ensuring Exhaustion does not become overwhelming.

Useful Supplements

There are many helpful supplements that can be taken as both preventative self-care and to alleviate symptoms of Exhaustion, these include:

- Mushrooms: Reishi, Cordyceps, and Shiitake are medicinal mushrooms commonly used in Chinese medicine to support the immune system, increase energy levels, and combat fatigue.
- Ginseng: Known for its adaptogenic properties, ginseng can enhance stamina, improve mental clarity, boost overall Qi and help the body to reduce stress.
- Goji Berries: Renowned for nourishing the Liver and Kidneys, Goji Berries are an ideal supplement to support the production and regulation of Qi and blood, which can then help to restore energy and vitality.

@katie_brindle

katiebrindle.com

info@katiebrindle.com



Conclusion

In Chinese Medicine, addressing exhaustion involves a comprehensive approach that balances the body's energies, nourishes the organs and harmonises emotions. This holistic view emphasises the importance of dietary habits, emotional well-being and lifestyle choices in managing and preventing exhaustion. Through targeted practices such as Yang Sheng techniques, diet therapy, mindful supplements and acupressure, we can effectively cultivate and maintain vital energy for overall health and wellbeing.

@katie_brindle

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Want to know more?

We will be delighted to support you as you continue along your Yang Sheng journey.

The following will get you started:

'Yang Sheng: The Art of Chinese Self-Healing' available on Amazon, Waterstone and www.hayoumethod.com

Buy Yang Sheng Book

Healing Movement classes (3 x each week) and live meditations for a more in-depth and healing practice – full details [here](#)

Free Masterclass "[Master Your Health](#)" – understand the 3- step plan for preventative health. Find more Healing Masterclasses [here](#).

Free self-care weekly content [@katiebrindle](#) on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube.

Free regular gua sha demonstrations on [@thehayoumethod](#) Instagram & the opportunity to purchase the accompanying tools from www.hayoumethod.com

DISCLAIMER:

Please note that any of these Yang Sheng techniques are designed to support your overall self-care and wellbeing and should not be used as a substitute for any Western medical advice or treatment that you may be receiving. You should not use the information in this Guide or on our website for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease and must always consult your doctor if you have any health concerns. Additionally, please note that there are a few contraindications to Yang Sheng techniques, so please visit www.hayoumethod.com to view our comprehensive FAQs.

[@katie_brindle](#)

katiebrindle.com

info@katiebrindle.com