



# KATIE BRINDLE

## Gout Guide

Treatment techniques based in Chinese medicine



# Overview

Gout is a form of inflammatory arthritis characterised by recurrent attacks of a red, tender, hot, and swollen joint, typically at the base of the big toe. It results from elevated levels of uric acid in the blood which crystallize and deposit within joints, tendons and surrounding tissues. Western medicine attributes this to factors such as diet, alcohol consumption, genetics and reduced excretion of uric acid. Chinese Medicine, however, views Gout as a disorder resulting from Qi and blood stagnation, often involving the accumulation of Dampness and Heat in the body, particularly in the joints. It is also seen as a disharmony between Yin and Yang energies, leading to the accumulation of these pathogenic factors.

## Causes

- **Qi and Blood Stagnation:** In Chinese Medicine, Gout is often seen as a result of stagnant Qi and blood, leading to the accumulation of uric acid crystals. This stagnation can be due to emotional stress, poor lifestyle choices, such as a sedentary life, and overconsumption of rich, purine-heavy foods which impede the proper flow of nutrients and waste products, contributing to the accumulation of uric acid crystals.
- **Dampness and Heat:** An unhealthy diet or lifestyle, such as the excessive intake of alcohol, rich, fatty foods and too much red meat, can generate internal Heat and Dampness in the body. When these pathogenic factors are allowed to accumulate, especially in the joints, they manifest as the painful symptoms of Gout.
- **Kidney Dysfunction:** The Kidneys are essential for water metabolism and the elimination of toxins. Imbalances in Kidney Qi can lead to inadequate filtration and poor uric acid excretion, exacerbating the symptoms of Gout.

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# Organs Implicated

- Spleen: The Spleen is responsible for the efficient transformation and transportation of food and nutrients around the body. However, weakened Spleen Qi can lead to the production and accumulation of Dampness which, when combined with Heat, often settles in the joints, contributing to Gout.
- Liver: With the role of governing the free flow of Qi and blood throughout the body, as well as the smooth movement of emotions, Liver Qi stagnation, often caused by emotional stress or poor diet, can result in blood stagnation and the accumulation of toxins and uric acid, which can then manifest as Gout.
- Kidneys: Responsible for water metabolism, filtration and the excretion of waste products, Kidney Yang deficiency can lead to impaired uric acid excretion, promoting the development of Gout.

# 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:

- Stress and Frustration (Liver): Chronic stress and unexpressed anger or frustration can lead to Liver Qi stagnation. This stagnation disrupts the flow of Qi and blood, contributing to the buildup of uric acid in the joints.
- Worry and Overthinking (Spleen): Excessive worry and mental overexertion can weaken Spleen Qi, leading to Dampness and further exacerbating Gout symptoms.

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- Fear (Kidneys): Deeply entrenched fears or chronic anxiety can weaken the Kidneys, affecting the body's ability to metabolise and excrete uric acid efficiently, allowing build up in the joints that cause the pain associated with Gout.

## 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.

### SP-9 (Yīnlíngquán):

Location: On the inner leg, just below the knee in the depression of the lower border of the bony prominence (medial condyle) of the tibia.

Why: Stimulating this point can help to clear Dampness and strengthen the Spleen, helping to alleviate the joint swelling and pain associated with Gout.

### LIV-3 (Tàichōng)

Location: Found on the top of the foot, in the fleshy webbing between the big toe and the second toe, approximately two thumb-widths from the edge of the webbing.

Why: This point will help to relieve Liver Qi stagnation, thereby reducing stress and its impact on Gout.

### GB-34 (Yánglíngquán):

Location: On the outer side of the leg, just below the knee, in the depression anterior and inferior to the head of the fibula.

Why: Harmonising the Liver and Gallbladder, stimulating this acupressure point can help to reduce Damp-Heat to lessen joint pain.

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### 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: Stimulating KID-3 can help to strengthen Kidney Qi, promoting the efficient elimination of uric acid and reducing Gout flare-ups.

## 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 Gout, including:

- Qigong: The rhythmic breathing and slow, coordinated movements of gentle qigong encourage a calm yet energised state as the practice works to balance Qi flow throughout the body, helping to reduce Dampness and Heat. This is particularly beneficial for those suffering from Gout as the enhanced flow of Qi and blood can prevent the stagnation that contributes to the buildup of uric acid. It will also help to reduce inflammation and improve joint mobility.
- Meditation: Even 15 minutes of mindful meditation can significantly reduce stress, which is known to exacerbate Gout. By calming the mind and reducing the impact of stress on the system we can begin to regulate the body's response to pain and inflammation. Meditation will also encourage emotional balance, which is vital for smoothing the stagnant Liver Qi that can aggravate Gout.

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- **Adequate Sleep:** Sufficient, good quality sleep – aiming to be asleep before 11pm, a key time for the Liver – will ensure that the natural nighttime detoxification and rejuvenation functions of the organ will be at their most effective. Good sleep promotes the body's healing processes and helps in the regulation of metabolism, including the processing of uric acid. It also aids in the balance of Yin and Yang energies, crucial for overall health and particularly beneficial for those with Gout.
- **Dietary Adjustments:** A diet low in purines is recommended for Gout sufferers. Purines are compounds found in certain foods that, when digested, produce uric acid. If not excreted, this can build up to form uric acid crystals, which then accumulate in the joints. Limiting intake of red meat, game, seafood and alcohol, and emphasising a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins will be beneficial, as this will help to prevent the accumulation of uric acid. Adding in foods that are naturally cooling and slightly diuretic, such as cherries, celery and cucumber, will be particularly helpful in the elimination of Dampness and Heat.
- **Hydration:** Adequate water intake is crucial for the management and prevention of Gout. Aim for eight glass of high quality filtered water each day, as proper hydration will aid in flushing out excess uric acid from the body, preventing its crystallization and accumulation in the joints. Water will also help to maintain a healthy flow of Qi and blood around the body, preventing stagnation.

## Useful Supplements

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

- **Celery Seed:** Used in Chinese Medicine to clear Heat from the body, celery seed is cooling and a useful diuretic, which will help to promote urination and assist in the elimination of uric acid. It also possesses anti-inflammatory properties.

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- Hawthorn Berry: These little berries are helpful for digesting rich, fatty foods, and can reduce the formation of Dampness and Heat in the body, alleviating and potentially preventing the onset of Gout.
- Turmeric: With its anti-inflammatory properties, due to the curcumin component, turmeric can help to manage the inflammation associated with Gout.
- Medicinal Mushrooms: Certain medicinal mushrooms, such as Reishi and Cordyceps, have anti-inflammatory properties, which will help to support the immune system and overall health of the body.

## Conclusion

Managing Gout from a Chinese Medicine perspective involves a comprehensive approach that extends beyond just symptom treatment. Yang Sheng practices, including Qigong, meditation and mindful dietary and hydration adjustments, are integral to this holistic approach. These practices work synergistically to balance Qi and blood, reduce the accumulation of Dampness and Heat, and promote efficient metabolism and excretion of uric acid to reduce the frequency and severity of flare-ups whilst supporting the whole body including, crucially, the Kidneys, Liver and Spleen.

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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](http://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](http://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](http://www.hayoumethod.com) to view our comprehensive FAQs.

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