



# KATIE BRINDLE

## Immunity Guide

Treatment techniques based in Chinese medicine



# About the Immune System

Our immune system comprises two main parts. The first is innate immunity. This protects you against outside threats via protective barriers, like mucus and stomach acid. The second is our adaptive immune system, which constantly develops with you. Each time you are exposed to a germ or illness, your adaptive immune system keeps a record of it and helps your body build up a pre-programmed defence so it cannot make you sick in the future. This adaptive immune process is a complex system of chemicals, cells, and biological pathways.

There are many ways we deplete our immunity in the modern world:

- Stress
- Excess Sugar
- Hydrogenated fats
- Dairy
- Heavy metals
- Antibiotics
- Recreational drugs
- Air pollution
- Deficient light
- Shallow breathing
- Being too sedentary

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## Chronic Stress

One major factor that depletes our immunity and deserves a sub heading all to itself. One study found that exposure to chronic stress actually changes the activity of the genes of immune cells—making them more likely to attack the body’s own tissue and trigger an autoimmune response. And to make things worse, chronic stress also creates inflammation, which hugely disrupts the workings of the immune system.

According to the tenets of Chinese medicine, the human immune system has three primary centres: the thymus gland, the adrenals and the spine. The spleen, bone marrow and lymph vessels and nodes also play a key role.

## Self-care techniques to support your immunity

In the same way that we can identify the things that don’t help our immune system, there are many things that do, solutions that have served us for thousands of years. I have divided these into 5 key areas:

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# Moving

Good circulation is the foundation of our health. Efficient circulation keeps the cells of the immune system moving, so that they can work effectively. It also encourages lymphatic drainage, which clears toxic waste.

Our lives are more sedentary than ever before. But, there is one incredibly easy way to get your circulation moving (even when you're sitting down) and this is tapping.

So, tap regularly all over your body, every day. You can use a loosely clenched fist, or a bamboo tapper to help you reach all over your back and tap more efficiently. I suggest you tap for at least one-minute morning and evening and throughout the day if you're feeling sluggish. You will feel it work immediately.

In addition to the overall tapping, there are areas you can focus on specifically to support immunity.

# The Thymus

Tap the thymus gland every day. The thymus is situated behind the breastbone, and it's where T cells, which fight infection, are produced in the body.

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## The Abdomen

We have many lymph nodes in the abdomen, so it's particularly good to focus around this area. In Chinese medicine, tapping the abdomen supports the spleen and other vital organs, which control the overall health of the body

## The Sides

The spleen is hugely important for immunity. From a Western perspective because of its relationship to white blood cells, and from an Eastern one because it has a close connection with the lymphatic system, which is key to the good functioning of your immunity. Tap your sides by the lower ribs with a loosely clenched fist or a tapper. Note – high intensity work outs create stress hormones, so tap before and after vigorous exercise to transition and relax the body.

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# Gua Sha & Immunity



Gua sha is a therapeutic healing technique, that has been widely practised in China for thousands of years. It involves using a round-edged tool, traditionally made from materials such as jade or metal, to pressstroke the skin until redness appears. You can even use a jam jar lid!

Gua Sha has been used to treat a whole range of conditions from fever to chronic cough and migraines. It has been shown in studies to increase micro-circulation by 400%, clear inflammation and increase immunity. But that's not all. Gua sha is also renowned for maintaining and strengthening the constitution and even improving your sleep.

Gua sha is a fantastic way to directly support the immune system. Firstly, it helps disperse toxins through increased circulation. Then as the blood is reabsorbed by the body it promotes an enzyme (HO-1) which is both antiinflammatory and immune boosting.

Gua sha offers a unique stimulation of the immune system through fascia and connective tissue. Keeping our fascia moving is an important prevention strategy. As the lymphatic channels run through fascia, when fascia is 'slippery', the lymph fluid moves through easily and the immune cells within the lymph fluid are able to fight infections and subsequently, reduce inflammation.

Start by focusing on the chest, neck and upper back because it helps to clear lymph, moves blood and reduces inflammation – which weakens one's immunity. The lymph nodes and tonsils are all in that area, so this motion keeps them clear and working at full capacity. You can reach most areas of the body yourself; and rope in a friend or partner to treat your back. You can practice body gua sha from the comfort of your own home, and we cover it on day 2 of the immunity masterclass on socials.

[View the Gua sha Guide](#)

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# Breath & Immunity

Use your breath! Breath is quite simply the most powerful self-healing modality we have. Breathing properly will immediately switch your body into its parasympathetic, or rest phase.

So, enjoy the Rescue Breath Ritual that I created in your daily shower – a perfect opportunity to maximise your breathing. The Rescue Breath is an instant and pleasurable antidote to stress. It will instantly steady your mind and lower your heart rate. It can be practised as and when you need it to create a moment of calm.

Simply take 5 deep breaths, exhale and smile right down into your lower abdomen. Then, repeat the technique whenever you need it.

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# Hot / cold bathing

I have always incorporated hot/cold bathing into my patient treatment plans, because contrast hydrotherapy is one of the easiest ways to support your health. But only recently has science begun to understand how contrast hydrotherapy reduces inflammation and lowers blood pressure.

As the water temperature rises the sympathetic nervous system becomes predominant, blood pressure, heart rate and blood sugar levels all rise. Then, to correct this condition, the parasympathetic nervous system kicks in: blood pressure decreases, heart rate goes down, and blood sugar also comes down, allowing the body to repair itself.

Hot water relaxes your muscles. Relaxed muscles send a message to the alarm centres in the brain that there's no threat, thus immediately engaging your parasympathetic nervous system (PNS).

The cold shower boosts both blood circulation and immune function, whilst exfoliation and tapping stimulate lymphatic drainage to excrete toxins. This is how you do it:

- Run a comfortably warm bath to about a third full.
- Dissolve a handful of minerals, such as Hayo'u Mineral Bath, and step in
- Stay seated as you slowly increase the temperature
- Stop once the bath is hot but not unbearable.
- While the bath is warming carry out a breath technique, e.g. Rescue Breath Ritual.
- Lie back and soak.
- For best results, intermittently stand and enjoy short bursts of cold water from the shower
- At the end of your bath, add a burst of cold water to refresh, or hot to relax

In Russian Banya, a venik (a bundle of small, leafy branches) is used to massage the skin. This is partially in order to encourage the circulation. Using the Body Tapper Bamboo after your bath has a similar effect, supercharging your circulation and leaving you feeling deeply relaxed, yet energised.





# Food and drink

‘He that takes medicine and neglects diet wastes the skills of the physician’ - Ancient Chinese proverb

There is, of course, much we can do to support these techniques with diet. Avoid the four whites (dairy, flour, sugar and salt), eat lots of fruits and vegetables and limit caffeinated drinks and processed foods. I also eat according to the season, to keep my body at strongest. I take astragalus root and elderberries for immunity.

I drink lots of jasmine tea and no ice in drinks! In Chinese medicine it is like pouring ice on the furnace of your stomach and it really slows down the process and your body has to work a lot harder to compensate. It’s also crucial to eat at regular times and to chew your food.

# Meditation & Immunity

Meditation is a fundamental pillar of Chinese medicine - and studies have confirmed a host of health benefits. If you struggle with traditional forms of meditation, there are simple Chinese techniques that offer impressive results.

[View the Meditation Guide](#)

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# Qigong & Immunity

Qigong is a fundamental pillar of Chinese medicine. It is classed as a form of internal exercise. Internal exercise is any combination of slow, considered movements with breath and mental engagement, it's often referred to as 'Chinese yoga'. Qigong is, quite simply, the ultimate selfhealing technique. Whatever your issue, qigong will help to rebalance the body. By learning to manipulate qi around the body, you rejuvenate and energise, lower the heart rate and blood pressure and support the immune system.

[View the Qigong Guide](#)

# Tapping & Immunity

Tapping with bamboo is an ancient Chinese therapy that works wonders for your general wellbeing. It's a simple, pleasurable, yet hugely effective way to support and maintain your health, no matter what your age or physical state. Tapping the skin on a daily basis enables the free flow of this all-important circulation. In as little as one minute a day, an all over body tap can clear areas of stagnation, support lymphatic drainage and encourage a smooth flow of blood and qi around the body. Think of it as a natural battery charger for the body.

[View the Tapping Guide](#)

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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

Qigong Healing classes (3 x each week) for a more in-depth and healing practice – full details on [www.hayoufit.com](http://www.hayoufit.com)

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

[KBL Cellulite and Stubborn Fat Masterclass](#)

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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