



KATIE BRINDLE

Liver Guide

Treatment techniques based in Chinese medicine



What is the function of the Liver?

The Liver is the largest solid organ in the body with over 500 functions, the most important of which are:

- Processing digested food from the intestine and successfully absorbing nutrients.
- Detoxifying the blood by clearing infections, including bacteria, and neutralising drugs and toxins.
- Removing waste products that haven't been excreted by the Kidneys via the blood.
- Breaking down carbohydrates into glucose and storing it, ready to be used as a quick source of energy when needed.
- Controlling levels of fats, amino acids and glucose in the blood, and storing iron, vitamins and other essential chemicals.
- Manufacturing bile and producing and breaking down proteins. Producing enzymes and proteins responsible for most of the chemical reactions in the body, such as blood clotting and tissue repair.

If our Liver isn't working efficiently we be at higher risk of experiencing health concerns such as:

- Hepatitis
- Non-alcohol fatty liver disease Alcohol-related liver disease
- Sciatic pain
- Insomnia
- Lack of energy
- Neck and shoulder pain or stiffness Acid reflux
- Cirrhosis
- Jaundice

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Chinese Wisdom

From a Chinese medicine perspective, Liver health is so much more than just physical health. The Liver is the organ responsible for the smooth flow of emotions as well as qi and blood. It is the organ that is most affected by excess stress or emotions. The partner organ of the Liver is the Gallbladder and for the purposes of this guide can be viewed as a single organ.

The Liver controls the amount of blood we have circulating around our bodies – which also supports a harmonious, unrestricted flow of qi throughout the system. As the 'General' of the body the Liver acts as the planner and decision maker; making sure that all the organs are working together. Its role is to keep everything moving and flowing, thereby avoiding stagnation. This smooth flow of blood and qi throughout the body will help to regulate sleeping rhythms, ensure proper vision, and allow the emotions to remain balanced.

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The importance of qi

In addition to physical symptoms of Liver imbalance, in Chinese medicine we also consider what is happening with the body at an energetic, or invisible, level. Qi is the energetic and vital life force that continually flows through us underpinning our physical, emotional, and spiritual health and wellbeing – it is the basis for our very existence. Like feelings and emotions qi can't be seen, yet it penetrates every part of our body at every moment. Even when we sit completely still, there will be some movement happening inside us. Our heart beats, fluids move, and every cell is constantly in motion. All these different types of energy, combined with our breath, is what makes up our qi. Qi isn't the same as circulation, but it is linked. When we stimulate our blood flow or move our lymphatic fluid, our qi is also stimulated, with everything flowing together through our meridians, the energetic pathways that run throughout the body.

It is the quality and movement of qi that determines our health. Smooth flowing qi and blood around the body will ensure that there are no blockages of energy, negativity or toxicity, leading to stagnation.

If stagnation is left untended, whether it be physical, emotional or spiritual, low-level niggles will be able to gain a foothold in the body, eventually manifesting as disease.

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The Role of Emotions

In Chinese medicine, we recognise that our emotions are connected to specific organs. We can't see emotions, but we feel and then physically express them. The overriding emotion connected with the Liver is anger, or we may feel frustrated or even bitter.

Imbalances in our Liver energy does not mean liver disease, but it is a subtle indication that our body is not in harmony and needs to be nourished to avoid our emotional health negatively impacting our physical health. Liver imbalances are very often a result of toxic overload such as too much stress, overwork or not maintaining a realistic work/life balance. Emotional stress will also impact the emotional health of our Liver. Other signs that we have Liver qi imbalances can include:

- Eye issues such as blurry vision, itchy, red or dry eyes
- Craving sour foods
- Irritability or quick to anger
- Feeling frequently frustrated
- Low spirits or feeling very emotional
- Unable to unwind at the end of the day
- Inability to be flexible

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Yang Sheng techniques and what you can do to help yourself

There are many things that you can do to support, nurture and nourish your Liver energy:

- Avoid eating too late at night as this will cause stress and stagnation in the Liver. Eating at least 2-3 hours before sleep will help your Liver's ability to repair and rejuvenate during the night.
- Practice the healing sounds for the Liver whilst visualising the colour green. Place your hands at the base of your ribs on the right side of your torso and imagine your Liver qi strong and balanced. Feel compassion as you make the sound Shhhhh.
- Regularly gaze into the distance to rest your eyes. The Liver opens into the eyes, so it is important to ensure you look after them. If you can, gaze onto a garden or trees but if this is not possible, change your screensaver to an image of flowers, plants or the forest.
- Gentle exercise such as qigong, walking, swimming, yoga or golf will be better for your Liver health than hard or fast exercises which can overburden the tendons, causing them to eventually lose their flexibility, impacting the Liver function of being flexible.
- Regular qigong practice, especially the Tiger moves from Animal Play or 'Tiger Straightens Back' from 12 Rivers, will nourish your Liver energy, keeping it strong and balanced.
- 'Shaking the Tree' is another simple qigong exercise and a quick energiser if you only have a moment or two. Simply shake the body all over, from head to toe – this is perfect to support the Liver, releasing tension and stagnation and improving circulation.
- Gua sha or gently rub the acupressure point called Taichong (LV3). This is located on the top of your foot about two finger widths above the webbing between the big and second toe. This is one of the best acupressure points to stimulate for Liver support as it clears qi stagnation.

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- The element associated with the Liver is wood, so growing plants, flowers or trees is great for your Liver energy. Spend some time in the garden or take a walk in a forest or park, enjoying the trees and greenery around you. If possible, have green plants in your home.
- Limit screen time, particularly before bed, to ensure deep, restorative sleep, which is vital for the Liver to repair itself.
- Use a wooden comb or wear wooden or bamboo accessories. Consider wearing jewellery in shades of green with good clarity, such as jade, emerald or green tourmaline.
- Transcend emotions as much as you can by recognising that you feel a negative emotion and replacing it with a positive one. Harmful emotions for the Liver are anger, hate, frustration or resentment, so try and replace them with the healing emotions of loving kindness, compassion, empathy and forgiveness.

What to eat to help your Liver

As well as the suggestions above, there are certain foods that are beneficial for Liver health:

- Try to avoid eating very spicy foods, bad fats, excessive caffeine and alcohol, as these will put added stress onto the Liver.
- Sour foods are helpful to support your Liver and if you crave this taste it may be an indication that your Liver needs some attention.
- Green tea, green leafy vegetables, lemons and fragrant herbs such as coriander, parsley and peppermint will be additional support.
- The following foods will also support your Liver qi: sourdough, vinegar, sauerkraut, apple, salami, tomatoes, yoghurt, bread, beef, pickles, pineapple, strawberry, papaya, pear, orange, peach, olives, pomegranate, plum, mango, grapes, fruit juice, mayonnaise, liver, sausage, turkey, sour cream, sprouts, barbecue sauce, beef, chicken, freshwater fish, asparagus.

There is a wealth of information in my book, “Yang Sheng – The Art of Chinese Self-Healing”.

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How to Use the Organ Guide

Practising the Hayo'u Method is a basic daily level of health maintenance, like brushing your teeth. You are responsible for it, you do it every day and it maintains your basic dental health.

Niggling issues such as poor sleep or digestion are the equivalent of bleeding gums. At this point, you might see the hygienist for a little help. This is when you employ the quick fixes in our guides.

[View the How to Use the Organ 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

Download Yang Sheng Book

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

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

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