

Qi Gong: Depression and Stress

This is the second article in a three part series related to different aspects of depression

By Lisa B. O'Shea

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Depression is a complex topic in the healthcare field. There are so many contributing factors to what can cause or exacerbate depression that many people are even confused as to whether they have it or not. Symptoms such as fatigue, mood swings,

anxiety, changes in appetite, trouble sleeping, stomach upset, headaches or other aches and pains, and withdrawing from friends or family can indicate that depression is present. It is important in such situations to seek out professional help through counseling and doctors may prescribe medications that can be very useful, but this is just a partial solution.

By the time a person is having trouble with depression, they have already been living in an impossibly stressful situation for months or more often, years. The stress of conflict in an persons life causes real physiological changes affecting things such as hormones, adrenalin, blood flow, circulation, cell growth, and the immune system. In order to help alleviate the affects of depression, a person has to change how the body handles this stress.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has some very specific and useful techniques to aid in the treatment of depression. According to TCM, stress and conflict affect the energy associated with the Liver and Gall Bladder. The emotion associated with problems with the Liver energy is anger.

The daily chore of holding in anger in order to "keep the peace" with friends, family, and co-workers will throw the Liver energy out of balance resulting in the symptoms associated with depression. But, jamming down natural emotions will never bring balance into a person's life. The only healthy solutions is to move the anger out of the body in such a way so as not to cause more conflict in your life. The following Qi Gong exercise helps the body to move this anger out to reduce these symptoms and bring back a sense of true peace and wellness.



Liver Sound
"Tshhh"
(Lean to Left)

Liver Sound

Sit on the edge of a chair or your bed. Place your palms facing up on your lap, elbows out slightly and away from your body.

Keep your back straight and relaxed and your chin in slightly. You can

have your eyes closed or opened slightly.

Begin the posture by bringing your hands out from the sides of the body. Stretch them out as far as they will go while keeping the elbows bent slightly and the shoulders relaxed. Continue to raise the hands up until they meet over the head. Interlock the fingers and turn the palms over to face the ceiling. Stretch slightly up with your right shoulder and lean to the left side. This should allow you to feel a gently pulling on the right side of your body where your liver is. Look up and **open your eyes wide for this posture.**

Exhale and make the following sound. "Tshhh" like water hitting a very hot frying pan. As you breathe out and make the sound, picture the negative emotion of anger coming out of your liver. When you have finished the sound, relax and inhale. Release your hands, turn them palm down and lower them slowly in front of your body down to your lap and place them palm up on your lap. Relax and feel the positive emotion of kindness growing in your liver as well as a bright green color filling your liver. Relax as long as you want and repeat as many times in a row as feels good.

Lisa B. O'Shea Certified Qi Gong Therapist and Instructor

Qi Gong Institute of Rochester 595 Blossom Rd. Ste. 307 Rochester, NY 14610
(585) 377-2044 Toll Free: (877) 346-4017 www.Qigongrochester.com