

The Yin and Yang of Acupuncture

by Shoshanna Katzman



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The theory of acupuncture holds that health stems from a harmonious balance of yin and yang and its accompanying free flow of qi (vital energy). Whether in nature or in the human body, yin and yang describe the existential representation of opposites in the universe. Yin represents the more feminine, soft, yielding, internal, receptive and calming aspects of life. It forms the basis of the nervous system, bones and bodily fluids. Yang represents the more masculine, hard, firm, external

and active aspects of life. The polar opposites of yin and yang are independent, yet never fully separate as yin cannot exist without yang and vice versa. We know that each contains the seed of its opposite which themselves have the potential to sprout at any time.

The dynamic transformative ebb and flow of these forces is illustrated within the Yin Yang Symbol providing a representation of how these polarities are contained within every component of the body. The two halves of this symbol resemble the shape of a fish where each side contains a thin and thick end. This serves as a visual representation for how yin and yang alternate between minimal and maximal.

An acupuncturist does their best to activate the energetic sprouting of yin and yang to maximize a person's innate healing ability.

Quite simply, extremely thin needles are inserted into “just the right” acupuncture points to directly impact yin-yang flow of bodily substances and within the vital organs. When balanced, homeostasis is restored along with overall health.

An acupuncturist takes the overall energetic constitution of a person into consideration when deciding which points are best for balancing yin and yang. This includes an assess-

ment of whether the person is displaying an overall excess or deficiency of yin or yang. Information is gathered through asking questions about their symptoms, especially as related to the existence of yin cold or yang heat. An acupuncturist evaluates the condition of their tongue looking for signs that water is deficient, or fire is excessive. They further learn through observing a person's body type, watching how they move, listening to the sound of their voice and even taking note of how they smell. An acupuncturist also uses palpation of the radial pulse to determine predominance of yin and yang within the body.

This process of yin-yang transformation takes place throughout the changing seasons of the year and is another important component of Chinese medicine evaluation. Within this continuum, yang is associated with emerging and the releasing of energy, while yin is associated with receiving and storing of energy. Staying mindful of these changes guides an acupuncturist in terms of providing acupuncture treatments and lifestyle recommendations that support the waxing and waning of a variety of environmental influences.

Acupuncture typically involves a series of weekly or biweekly treatments. A treatment lasts on an average of 20 minutes once the needles are inserted. It is a pleasant and deeply healing experience that activates your internal energetic resources to procure long-lasting physical, emotional and spiritual wellness. Give yourself the opportunity to reach higher health horizons through this ancient modality.

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