

The Life Energy of Your Eyes

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by Shoshanna Katzman



We learn from Chinese medicine that one's eyes are a reflection of the quality and quantity of their shen – the spiritual aspect of being that controls and regulates life. Within this paradigm, eyes which are bright, sparkling, clear and responsive indicate a strong and ample shen substance. Strong shen leads to higher levels of realization and spiritual acuity, along with enhanced insight and strength of conviction. And quite importantly, a strong and bright shen promotes being more present in the moment and having the mental acuity for making important life decisions.

On the other hand, eyes that are dull and lack luster as if no one is present behind them indicates shen is deficient or disturbed. In this case, Chinese medicine modalities that build blood flow are important for manifesting a harmonious shen foundation and substantial reserve of spiritual energy. This is due to shen receiving nourishment from the blood and being transported via the blood vessels. Shen also flows within the meridian system, primarily via the extraordinary vessels.

Acupuncture therapy provides an excellent way to nourish shen and brighten the eyes. It serves to restore balance, optimal flow and restore overall health through manipulating the way life force is moving throughout the body, mind and spirit. This happens through the insertion of thin needles into acupuncture points located along the meridian pathways of the body. The goal is to

release energetic blockages to promote flow of qi and blood along with strengthening vital organ function. This is especially important for overall eye health because all vital organs serve to nourish the eyes and every meridian pathway runs through the eyes.

Chinese medicine teaches us that an energetic imbalance within the body may show up as an eye problem – with the most common found within the liver energetic organ system. The liver “opens to the eyes” and treatment of its meridian pathway is primary in terms of healthy vision. This is accomplished by treating liver points on the body as an adjunct to those located around the eyes. In this way, acupuncture works by treating both “the root and the branch.” Results are thus gained through building qi and blood flow specifically to the eyes in addition to the whole body.

Acupuncture treatment protocol is determined after a comprehensive intake process in order to reveal the precise energetic imbalance and appropriate treatment principle to be followed. If a person is found to have an imbalance of liver energy, an acupuncturist would choose to treat an acupuncture point such as liver 3 (tai chong) on the top of the foot. This serves to regulate liver qi as this point regulates smooth flow of qi throughout the body. It also subdues liver yang which otherwise causes excess heat in the body. While at the same time, this point nourishes liver yin which means it increases water and blood. Accordingly, inserting an acupuncture needle into liver 3 would be useful for an eye condi-

tion such as dry eyes. This is due to its eliminating heat leading to dryness, nourishing the eyes with water and blood along with “dampening fire with water.”

It is not surprising that research studies show acupuncture helps to improve eye conditions such as dry eyes. Research also finds acupuncture to be helpful in reducing eye symptoms associated with allergies as well as eye disease of an inflammatory nature. Acupuncture research further shows that it reduces temperature of the eye surface, thereby helping reduce evaporation of tears throughout the day. Another study finds that it decreases eye pressure significantly which is related to a disease of the optic nerve known as glaucoma. These studies show promising results with more needed to elucidate the full impact that acupuncture can have for preventing and treating eye health problems.

Better nutrition is also important for maintaining optimal vision. This includes choosing foods that are more alkaline, rather than acidic. Nutritional supplements such as lutein/zeaxanthin have also been found to provide help to the eyes. There are also numerous Chinese herbal formulas recommended for eye health. Consult an acupuncturist who is certified to practice Chinese herbal medicine.

Practice self-acupressure on points located around your eyes on a daily basis. One such point is located at the inner corner of the eye – known as bladder 1 or jing ming which means ‘bright eyes.’ Another is an extra point called yu yao which is located at the center of the eyebrow above the pupil. Simply apply pressure to these points with the tip of a finger or thumb for at least 15 seconds and then repeat a total of six times.

Furthermore, it is important to have regular visits with an ophthalmologist to learn more about how to achieve and maintain healthier eyes. They will most likely recommend protecting your eyes from excessive blue light which comes from our cellphones, computers and televisions. In addition, they will share with you the importance of protecting yourself from excessive ultraviolet rays from the sun. Putting all of this together provides you with a more holistic approach to your eye care – derived from both a western and eastern perspective. What better way is there to ensure excellent vision for the rest of your life.



Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S. is an acupuncturist, Chinese herbalist and director of Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center in Shrewsbury, NJ for over thirty years. She is author of *Qigong for Staying Young: A Simple 20-Minute Workout to Cultivate Your Vital Energy* (visit www.qigong4.us) and co-author of *Feeling Light: The Holistic Solution to Permanent Weight Loss and Wellness*. Shoshanna has taught tai chi and qigong for over 45 years and is a 6th generation lineage holder of the Guang Ping Yang Style Tai Chi Form. She is offering qigong and tai chi instruction via Zoom and outdoors weather permitting. For more information call 732.758.1800 or send an email to info@healing4u.com

