

Alleviating Anxiety with Chinese Medicine

by Shoshanna Katzman



Chinese medicine lessens anxiety by calming the mind through “pacifying the heart and spirit.” It works to dispel excessive worry through balancing the energetics of the spleen, as this organ system is associated with overthinking according to the Law of the Five Elements. Positive results are further achieved through building kidney energy thereby reducing excessive fear and simultaneously enhancing the core energy of the entire body.

A modality such as acupuncture removes energetic blockages, restores proper flow of qi (vital energy) and brings one into a more balanced state of health via the insertion of small, thin needles into specific acupuncture points on the body. It is traditionally known to activate the parasympathetic nervous system thereby bringing forth quietude and allowing one to “rest and digest” in stressful situations.

This helps to explain the basis for recent research suggesting that acupuncture works for anxiety by impacting how the body triggers the fight or flight response.

Seeking help from a Western medical doctor is essential for obtaining a proper diagnosis and treatment recommendations for securing lasting change. Many people have found psychotherapy to be quite effective for helping them establish a more balanced emotional state. Instituting new patterns of behavior further empowers one to be less reactive in stressful situations that trigger high levels of anxiety.

Behavior changes may include engaging in regular exercise in addition to going to bed and rising early. Eating a healthy balanced diet and avoiding foods and drinks containing caffeine is another smart choice, as is refraining from drinking alcohol, smoking and partaking in recreational drugs. Choosing and maintaining relationships that support a positive mental state is key to keeping anxiety from rising within one’s energetic system.

Establishing a better work/life balance is a key component for managing stress and anxiety. Another good habit to establish is becoming mindful of taking deep breaths



throughout the day. Many people also find it helpful to practice exercises that incorporate breathing techniques such as yoga or qigong. In addition, the ancient exercise art of taiji (tai chi) is especially helpful for teaching one to become more relaxed, centered and grounded.

The bottom line is that there are a multitude of things you can do to help yourself. It takes initiative to find the way that works best for you. Ask your physician for ideas, reach out to friends that might be suffering with anxiety or know someone that is. Find out what they did to help themselves. Seek out a nutritionist to help you with food choices and find a therapist specializing in anxiety. Set up a consultation with an acupuncturist, someone highly trained in Chinese herbal medicine. You may also look to join a yoga, qigong or taiji class. Keep in the forefront of your mind throughout this process that your body is meant to heal itself. It’s a matter of finding the missing link to keep you relaxed, centered and able to halt your anxiety from revealing itself in ways that disturb the sanctity and peaceful nature of your life.

Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S. has been director of Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center in Shrewsbury, NJ approaching thirty-five years where she provides acupuncture, Chinese herbal consultation in addition to Taiji and Qigong lessons. She is author of Qigong for Staying Young: A Simple 20-Minute Workout to Cultivate Your Vital Energy and co-author of Feeling Light: The Holistic Solution to Permanent Weight Loss and Wellness. Shoshanna has been working on Center of Power: Life Mastery through Taiji for over six years and will be releasing it soon. It is a comprehensive curriculum guiding one in the energetics of this ancient exercise along with over 130 videos. For more information call or text 732.758.1800 or send an email to info@healing4u.com.