

# The Timeless Rhythm of Late Summer

by Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S.



The change of seasons is particularly important in Chinese Medicine as it signifies an energetic shift within the natural environment and within each individual. Seasonal changes register within the body physically, spiritually, emotionally and energetically. Chinese medicine takes note of this and offers specific recommendations to ensure optimal balance and health.

Yin Yang Theory teaches that each season supports an easy transition from one to the next. Late summer follows the yang of spring and summer, which includes expansion, playfulness, activity and a more masculine energy. And it is followed by the yin of autumn and winter, which includes the qualities of storage, inwardness, mysteriousness, coolness and more feminine energy.

Late summer thus forms a bridge

energetically between this yang to yin transition. It begins with heat (yang) and is accompanied by stillness and tranquility (yin). It then transitions into cooler temperature (yin) accompanied by ripening and fullness (yang).

**Even with living so much of the late summer in an air-conditioned environment our bodies are still naturally in tune with the timeless rhythm of this season.**

Late summer is referred to as the fifth season according to The Law of the Five Elements. It is related to the earth element, meaning health is maintained when balance is kept with this element. The spleen and stomach are the earth element's associated yin and yang organs, respectively. They work together to ensure proper and

healthy digestion.

Paying special attention to digestive habits and food choices is extremely important to ensure a healthy body and mind during late summer. Taking time to be quiet and focus on one's food during mealtimes is a good place to begin. It is also essential to chew food completely, eat meals at the same time each day and be sure to not overeat.

As the "minister of the mill," the stomach breaks down ingested foods and fluids. The high temperature of late summer can lead to an excess stomach imbalance resulting in confusion, anxiety, hyperactivity and even manic behavior. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to protect oneself from the heat. As "the source of life," the spleen transforms food broken down by the stomach into usable nutrition and qi, which it then transports to the other body organs. Impediment of spleen's digestive function results in symptoms such as indigestion, poor assimilation, bloating and phlegm.

In terms of late summer, this is a possibility due to excess heat aggravating the spleen – typically known as "excess damp heat of the spleen." Appropriate dietary choices are essential to support the energetics of the spleen, as it is impaired by excessively sweet and cold foods.

Another bio-energetic function of the spleen is blood production and transformation of fluids in the body. If the spleen fails to uphold these functions anemia, fatigue and excessive bruising results. It also leads to water retention, joint problems, phlegm and bloating. Seasonal acupuncture is an effective treatment during the late summer to keep the body in balance – thus avoiding such energetic conditions and symptoms.

Acupuncture is traditionally reputed for strengthening immunity. It is especially important during the change of seasons due to the body being more vulnerable to

colds and flus or resurgence of a chronic condition. This happens when one's flow of qi and energetic frequency is out of harmony with late summer - potentially leading to inner turmoil and deficiency of energy.

**Acupuncture balances qi to assist energetic alignment. This helps prevent physical symptoms along with mental and emotional distress. It maximizes internal healing capability, boosts digestive energy and calms the mind.**

Prevention is a key guiding principle in Chinese Medicine. Seasonal acupuncture is a good place to begin in combination with sound nutritional choices and right living habits. This is important to boost, balance and tune-up your energetic inner potential – thus manifest health and overall sense of wellbeing. It is a wise investment in your health to ensure a life of energetic flow and balance.

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