

# Acu News

"The art is long, life is short"- Hippocrates!

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## The Many Dimensions of the Gallbladder



The gallbladder is one of the most commonly treated yang organ energetic systems we treat with acupuncture. Each system in Chinese medicine is designated as either yin or yang. Very generally speaking, the yin organ systems store vital substances, whereas yang organ systems fill and empty themselves more dynamically. Each yin organ system is paired with a yang organ system and vice versa. In modern acupuncture practice, most acupuncturists pay a lot of attention to the yin organ systems, but the yang systems are very important too.

The gallbladder is one such system. Now, it is important to note that from a Chinese Medicine perspective, when we talk about a particular organ, such as the liver or heart or gallbladder, we are not talking about the physical organ that sits inside your body. Rather, we are talking about a complex system of energy that flows within particular pathways and has a particular physiological function.

In Chinese Medicine, one of the essential functions of the gallbladder system is to control the flow of bile. This is its yang organ function of filling and emptying. Each yang organ is paired with a yin organ - the gallbladder is paired with the liver. The liver and gallbladder work together on many physiological functions, including bile production and excretion.

The gallbladder system controls the sinews (or ligaments and tendons.) Thus, points on the gallbladder meridian are often treated for any sort of soft tissue injury, such as tendonitis, muscle sprains, strains and tendon tears. The gallbladder meridian itself runs along the sides of the body - making it doubly useful for musculoskeletal pain affecting the neck, shoulders, ribs, lateral abdominals, hips, IT Bands, knees, shins and ankles.

On a mental-emotional level, the gallbladder system is related to decisiveness and courage. A strong gallbladder gives us the ability to make decisions, and the courage to see them through. A weak gallbladder leads to lots of second-guessing, timidity and fearfulness.

On both a physical and a mental/emotional level, the gallbladder is about stability and the

boundaries of self. Physically, the gallbladder meridian traverses the borders of our body - when its function is impaired, musculoskeletal problems easily arise and our balance and equilibrium are weakened. Emotionally, a weak gallbladder means our sense of self is endangered - we are unable to fight for what we believe in, we waver in our opinions and we are apprehensive with our interactions with the outer world.

### Nourishing the Gallbladder through Food

Because of the gallbladder's close relationship with the liver, any liver-nourishing foods will benefit the gallbladder as well, such as liver, mustard greens, goji berries, beets, broccoli and sprouts. Because the gallbladder is closely tied to digestive function through bile production, when trying to balance the gallbladder energy, it is important to limit fried and greasy foods, as well as dairy, sugar, caffeine or highly acidic foods.

### Nourishing the Gallbladder through Lifestyle

Of all the systems in the body, the gallbladder system perhaps craves movement the most. The gallbladder meridian will become cranky and painful with lack of movement. So do your best to incorporate some sort of exercise each day.

Stretch! Stretching enlivens the connective tissue, which the gallbladder system controls. Take a yoga class, or devote some extra time to stretching post-workout. In particular, try to incorporate stretches that get to the sides of your body, as this is gallbladder meridian territory.

Work out the muscle knots. Use massage, acupuncture or foam rolling to break up adhesions in the connective tissue of the IT Bands, neck and shoulders or back. Physically, this will help you to recover more quickly after exercise and help alleviate pain and tension. Emotionally, it may also let you free from old emotions, as emotions are often stored in the body in the form of tension, knots and pain. Releasing those knots, particularly along the gallbladder meridian, can help you find strength and flexibility you didn't know you had.

## 4 Ways to Make Mother Earth Smile

Earth day is a time in which we celebrate the marvelous planet we are lucky enough to inhabit, but Earth day shouldn't be the only time you appreciate Mother Earth. You should strive to be consistent in your earth-friendly habits and make sure to treat the planet the same every day, not just on its holiday. Here are seven ways you can treat the planet better and make Mother Earth smile.

### 1 Watch the water.

Try and eliminate your use of water as much as you can. Humans waste a ton of water a day and it is easy to cut down on water waste. Some simple solutions to this are turning off your water while you brush your teeth, checking for leaks in faucets and stopping them, turning off the water in between doing the dishes and not over-watering your lawn



### 2 Turn in the keys for a pair of hiking boots...or a bike.

The bottom line here is to cut your greenhouse gas emissions you are producing. In order to do this switch to an alternative form of transportation such as biking or walking.



### 3 Turn off the lights!

Make sure not to waste energy and turn off all lights and other electronics when you are not using them. A little conservation can go a long way, help out the planet and don't have appliances turned on when you aren't using them.



### 4 Plant a tree.

This one is real self-explanatory, but so important. Go outside and plant a tree, although it will take time to grow, it will be well worth it.



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