

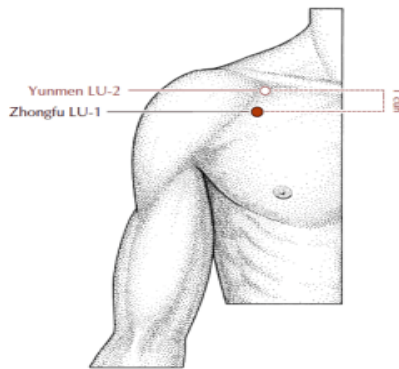
Balancing Act



The Awakening Balance Acupuncture Quarterly Newsletter

Autumn

Element: **Metal** Color: **White** Nature: **Yin** Organs: **Lungs, Large Intestine** Emotion: **Grief/Sadness**



Featured Seasonal Acupuncture Point: Lung-1, the "Middle Palace"

LU-1 can be found on the lateral aspect of the chest and is the meeting point of the lung and spleen channels. If you're experiencing coughing, wheezing, chest pain, difficulty breathing, fever, throat pain, congestion, or any other cold or flu like symptoms there could be a blockage of Qi along your Lung channel. When addressed in treatment, this point helps to disseminate and descend the Lung Qi and alleviate congestion. On an emotional level, LU-1 helps aid inspiration and expiration, helping those who struggle with the transition from Summer to Fall.



The Metal Element

Fall is the beginning of the yin cycle when the daylight lasts less than twelve hours. It's a time of harvest when we gather the colorful fruits and vegetables for winter storage. Pumpkins and squashes are our symbols of bounty. We also store wood for the fire and get out our warm clothes for the colder, darker days of winter.

According to Oriental medicine, the season of autumn is associated with the element of Metal, which governs organization, order, communication, the mind, setting limits, and protecting boundaries. It's a good time to finish projects that you began in spring and summer – harvesting the bounty of your hard work. Of course, it's also the perfect time to begin more introspective, indoor projects.

Self-Reflection and Letting Go

During the summer, which is ruled by the Fire element, we deal more with the external – traveling and playing outdoors. Fall, on the other hand, is a time of organizing your life for the winter season ahead and coming more inside your body and mind to reflect on your life.

The lung and large intestine are the internal organs related to fall and the Metal element. The lungs and the large intestine are associated with the emotions of inspiration, expiration and letting go. This process is difficult for those who love the summer. They find it hard to give up the long days of sunlight, warm temperatures, and open windows. Others feel differently and love autumn, from the crisper air to the vivid red, orange, and yellow leaves on the trees. If letting go of summer is hard for you, extra support from your licensed acupuncturist may be in order to help you make the transition

Tips for Autumn Health

Various systems of self-mastery teach that by controlling your breath, you can achieve and maintain physical vigor, mental clarity and emotional tranquility. The ancient Taoists developed a practical discipline of breathing called Qi Gong to increase vitality, extend lifespan, and prevent disease. This is a wonderful skill to learn as the Summer gives way to Fall.



Sleep is another important aspect of staying healthy in the fall. The ancients advised that people should retire early at night and rise with the crowing of the rooster during the autumn. "Soul and spirit should be tranquil and to keep their lung pure they should not give vent to their desires."

Lung is considered by Oriental medicine to be the "tender organ." This is because the lung is the uppermost organ in the body and especially susceptible to wind and cold. During the change in temperature, be sure to dress for the weather! Too many people are still dressed for summer at the beginning of autumn, which is an open invitation for coughs, sore throats, and the common cold.



ALWAYS WEAR A SCARF

The lungs control the circulation of the Wei-Qi, which is the defensive Qi that protects you from the invasion of flu and colds. The Wei-Qi circulates on the surface between the skin and muscles and works to warm the body. If the Wei-Qi is weak, the skin and muscles will not be warmed properly. This is why people tend to feel cold when they're sick. A weakness in the lungs can lead to a weakness in the Wei-Qi, making a person prone to frequent colds.

The nose is the opening to the lungs, and you can prevent colds by keeping your nose and sinuses clean, clear and moist. Using a netti pot with some sea salt and water helps rid the nose of excess mucus. If you suffer from a runny nose or sinus infections, acupuncture and Chinese herbs are wonderful for alleviating that problem.

What you eat also greatly affects the health of your lungs and large intestines. Eating excess cold and raw foods creates dampness or phlegm which is produced by the spleen and stored by the lungs. Dairy products, such as milk, cheese, cream, and butter also create phlegm, while moderate amounts of pungent foods like garlic, onions, ginger, horseradish, and mustard are beneficial to the lungs.



The Transition from Summer to Fall



The transition from Summer to Fall is a time when Qi is instable. The Qi from healthy lungs should descend, however if the Lung Qi goes upward and is "rebellious" then the person will experience a cough. The Lungs inhale "Heavenly Qi" (oxygen) and exhale "Dirty Qi" (carbon dioxide). Now is the time to strengthen your Qi to prepare for winter and get a tune-up from your licensed acupuncturist to strengthen your immune system.