

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

by Whitney Yang, on 06/11

CATEGORY

Wellness



SUMMARY

TCM techniques use needles, suction cups, and burning herbs to heal patients through stimulating acupuncture points and improving blood flow

TOP SPAS

Chuan Spa	6 locations globally
Mandarin Oriental Spa	Hong Kong, China
Grand Hotel Des Iles Borromees	Milan, Italy
Fusion Life Spa	Deephaven, Minnesota
Aman Spa	Summer Palace, Beijing

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has been developing for over 5,000 years. TCM principles and practices have influenced countless health and healing traditions around Asia. The basic aim of all TCM practice is to restore balance and flow to the patient's "Qi" (pronounced *chee*). "Qi" is the Chinese expression for "life energy," which is understood to be the basis for all life. Along with Qi, TCM is based on other important concepts such as the "Yin and Yang" philosophical framework of opposing forces, and the "Five Elements" ("Wu Xing") in which phenomena of the natural world (earth, wood, fire, water, metal) are used as an analogy to the interconnectedness of the human body.

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Ancient Chinese medical practitioners mapped the human body with energy pathways called “meridians”. Each meridian is dotted with acupressure trigger points. There are traditionally 14 meridians; each of the 12 internal organs has its own meridian which runs through the entire body and connects to the wider meridian network, plus one meridian that runs along the spine and another along the abdomen. Qi (energy), blood, emotion, and information are transported through these meridians. Illnesses of the mind, body, or spirit can create blockages in the meridians which manifest themselves as physical disease.

TCM methods focus on unblocking the meridians and thus re-balancing the flow of Qi through acupuncture, massage, moxibustion, cupping, scraping, exercise, and herbal medicines. While TCM is used to target illness, TCM methods are often part of a regular preventative health routine in China. TCM clinics and shops can be found on every corner in Chinese cities, while people of all ages enjoy traditional energy exercises like Qigong and Taichi in parks and other public spaces.



ACUPRESSURE & ACUPUNCTURE

These two predominant TCM practices both utilize 400-500 established [acupoints](#) that lie on the body's meridians. Acupressure applies strong pressure to acupoints using hand techniques or Chinese massage tools. Acupuncture uses needles that pierce the skin and stimulates them by hand or with electrical machines. [The World Health Organization recognizes acupuncture's ability](#) to treat dozens of diseases, symptoms, or conditions.

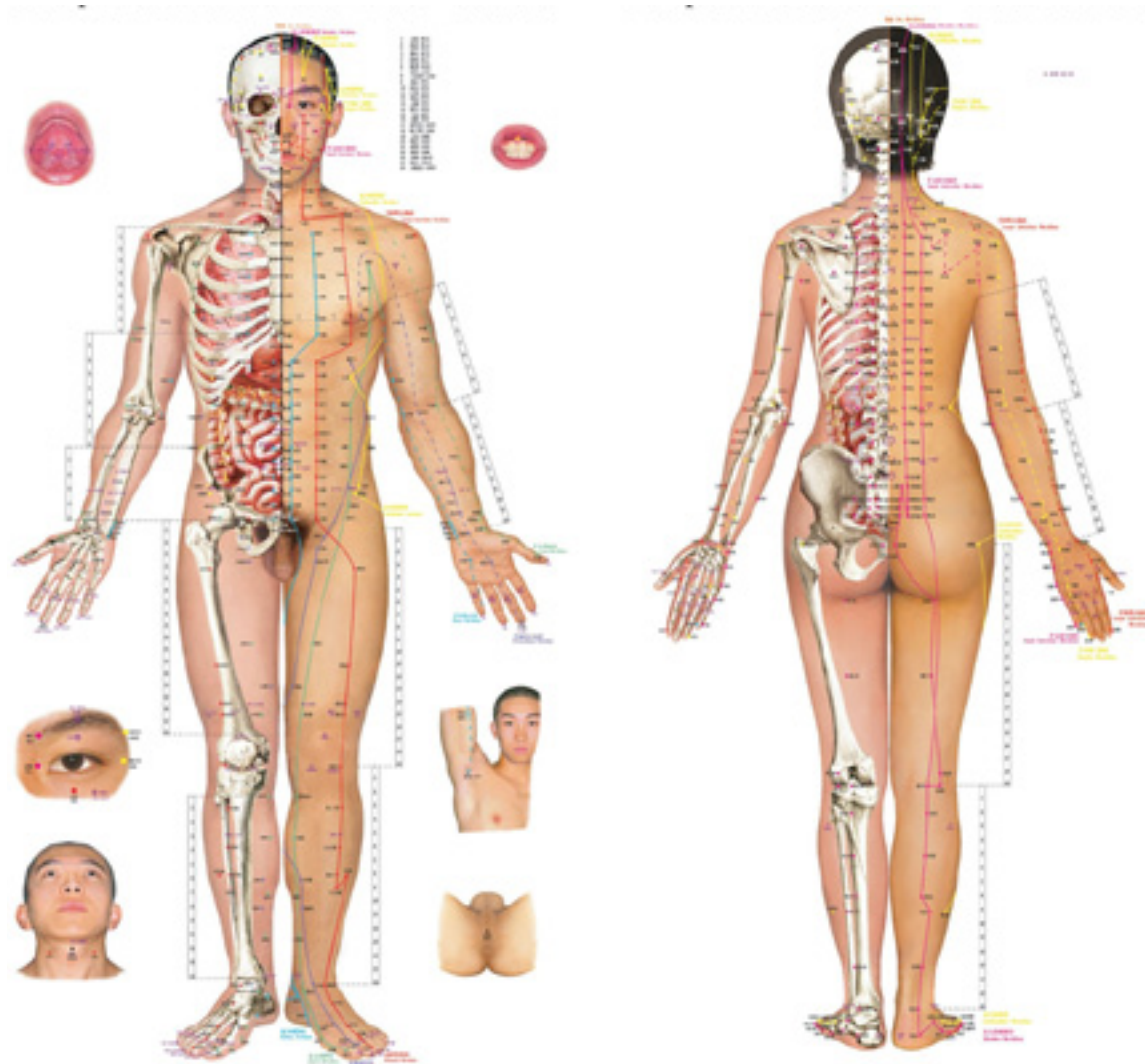
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MOXIBUSTION

The primary tool in moxibustion treatment is a cigar-shaped stick filled with a powder made from aged, dried, and ground mugwort root. Mugwort is said to stimulate blood flow, especially around the uterus. The stick is burned on or near acupressure points on the skin, or on top of acupuncture needles. Moxibustion is commonly used to treat arthritis, back pain, headaches, ulcers, infertility, tendonitis, menstrual cramps, and digestive problems.

CUPPING

In cupping therapy, cups are placed on the back and suction is created with fire or with a hand/mechanical pump. Depending on the situation, the practitioner may keep the cups in one place for several minutes, or drag them around, promoting blood flow in specific problem regions of the body. Cupping is often used to treat respiratory diseases, as well as musculoskeletal conditions. The traditional practice has recently become popular among [Hollywood celebrities](#).



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FURTHER READING

[Traditional Chinese Medicine World Foundation](#)

[NCCAM - Introduction to Traditional Chinese Medicine](#)

[Harmony TCM clinic in New York](#)

[Acupuncture Today – Introduction to Cupping](#)