

Liver and the Lack of Sleep



“I have created a guided visualization to connect you with your liver. The purpose is to gain a perception of yourself and your environment viewed from a place where clarity and purity are paramount...”

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TCM and Gut Function

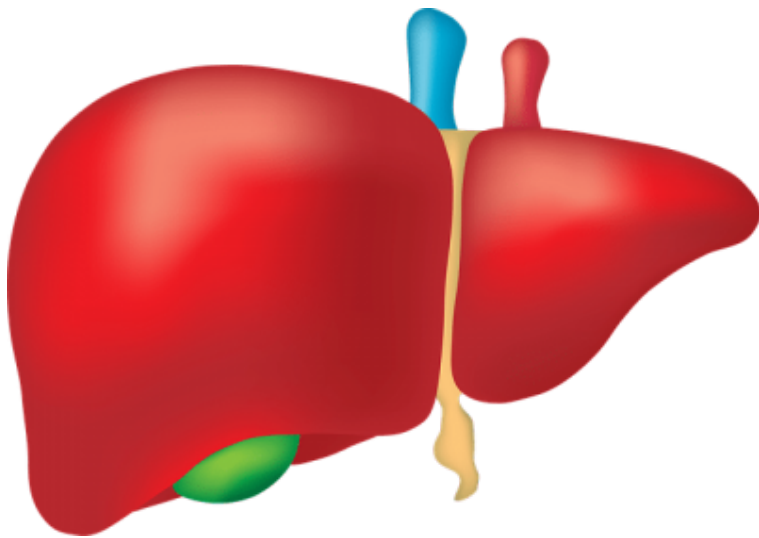
“According to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM)... the liver holds ‘the soul’; it is associated with the fire element and it is considered more important than the heart, an organ full of energy and powers, making it extremely important to cleanse the liver regularly. The liver manages everything, including moderating mental activity. In TCM, it is thought that if **qi (chi, our vital energy)** is unable to flow along the liver meridian, it ends up concentrating in the organ and showing up as irritability, insomnia, depression, anguish, melancholy, and doubt. The phlegm gets stuck, and the mind clouds over. The gallbladder, for its part, governs decision making, courage, and cowardice. If a patient’s gallbladder doesn’t function well and accumulates bile, he will have a fearful attitude to life. For this reason, in TCM, liver flushing is the treatment of choice for the maintenance of health.

“...according to theories of energy medicine, liver flushing means to move, purge and discharge the emotions. After around two or three weeks, the first thing many patients report is an improvement in their digestion but also an intense emotional well-being, a more positive attitude, and a sensation of greater vitality; sincerely, they seem happier.”

from *Digestive Intelligence: A Holistic View of Your Second Brain*, by Dr. Irina Matveikova (2014)

TCM provides its own description of physiology during sleep and the psychology related to it. It divides up the period between 11pm and 7am into four sections with a different energy dominating each. You'll find summaries of this on many websites, such as in this post: "**Traditional Chinese Organ Body Clock.**" TCM ascribes insomnia to imbalances of these energy systems, as summarized here: "**Waking Up At The Same Time Each Night.**"

A comprehensive 2016 article by Leslie Korn reviews gut function from a Western perspective, focusing on digestive chemistry and recent insights into the Enteric Nervous System. It appeared in Vol. 4 Issue 12 of *The Neuropsychotherapist*, is free on ResearchGate.com, and can be viewed as a PDF file here: **The Second Brain: Trust Your Gut.**



The Body Clock

According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, the periods between 11pm-1am, 1am-3am, and 3am-5am have the following associations.

11pm – 1am: Gallbladder

According to TCM the gallbladder “is responsible for what is exact and just.” Waking during this time could involve the processing of indecisiveness and resentment. It is also associated with insufficiency; specifically being fearful or panicky about choices or outcomes, a lack of courage, initiative, and assertiveness. The gallbladder is a pivot between courage and fear. See easterncurrents.ca/the-gallbladder

1am – 3am: Liver

During this time, toxins are released from the body and fresh new blood is made. Waking during this time could involve problems with detoxification. Waking between 1am-3am may be due to repressed anger, resentment, frustration, irritability, or bitterness. The eyes are the sensory organ related to the Liver. See tcmworld.org/wisdom-for-liver-health

3am – 5am: Lungs

If woken at this time, consider nerve-soothing exercises involving breathing and body relaxation. Your body is beginning to heat up at this time, so you will be more comfortable if you keep yourself warm. The lungs are associated with feelings of grief and sadness, either the expression

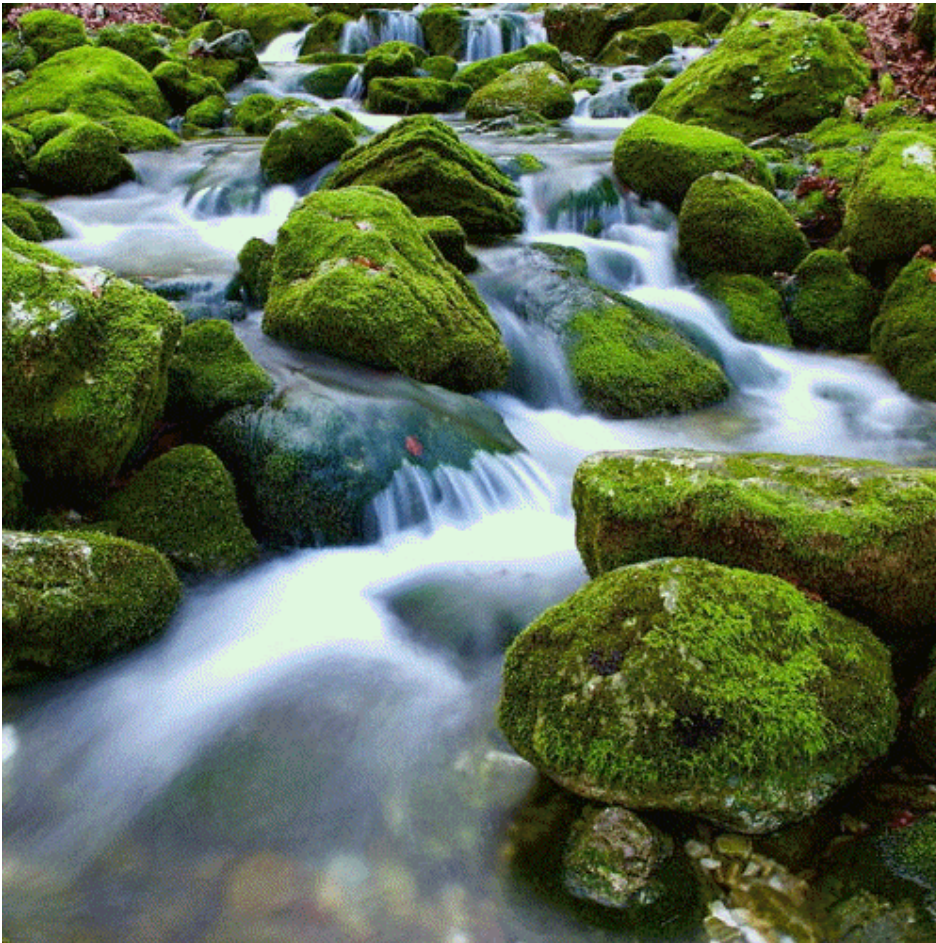
or the repression of them. See chinesemedicineliving.com/the-lungs-in-chinese-medicine

5am – 7am:

Large Intestine. The large intestine is all about ‘letting go’ physically and emotionally. Emotions of depression, irritability, discouragement, distress, releasing, compulsiveness, confusion, guilt, and regret. Physical issues of elimination pertaining to the colon, rectum, skin, bloating or dehydration. See fiveseasonsmedicine.com/the-large-intestine

I don’t hold to a rigid interpretation of the TCM clock or its times, though I have studied with TCM practitioners who do. The quoted segments of the clock are flexible, as the methods by which we understand the clock are flexible. And the “organs” referred to by TCM are not the organs we know in Western medicine. TCM organs are analogs of those in Western medicine, but do not perform the same functions. TCM is concerned with energies and coordination, not objects operating separately from each other.

The TCM clock offers useful suggestions for insomnia, but your clock may be slightly different depending on constitution, habit, schedule, genetics, health, life situation, and season. Nevertheless, I invite you to consider the idea of a sequence of physically different cycles and emotional states throughout the night.



Trance and Guided Visualization

I work with these issues using guided visualizations, trance, and hypnosis. I use these tools to help my clients isolate their feelings, to amplify their sensitivity to those feelings, and to better coordinate their connection, resources, and needs.

The idea is that our physical body, daily schedule, and emotional pathways are dynamically interconnected and relatively invisible to us. Trying to focus one’s attention, follow one’s own clues, and reconfigure one’s

energies feels like chasing a flock of birds, or a school of fish: they seem to be going every which way.

It is relatively easy to attend to the breath or digestion, and so to focus on the lungs and large intestine. It is not easy to imagine sensations of the liver and gallbladder as their musculature and operations are beyond our conscious control. For these, we must use our imagination by recalling whatever sensations and emotions are familiar. By creating a picture and feeling, we can reconnect to an otherwise neglected part of ourselves.

We can do this by relaxing and focusing on selected perceptions. Then, we move into a state that invites the emergence of feelings, ideas, and emotions. Finally, we attune to inclination, intuition, and subtle perceptions that we otherwise obscure with agitation, cogitation, irritation, tension, and our generally incessant mental chatter.

We want to experience multiple levels of awareness, and to recognize ourselves as composed of multiple personalities with different levels of awareness. We want to recognize our obsession with certain issues and how we react in compulsive ways. To relax these reflex behaviors, and regain the ability to regulate ourselves.

The Healer Within, Using Tradition Chinese Techniques to Release Your Body's Own Medicine, by Roger Jahnke, 1997, is a 13-chapter book on self-care in Chinese medicine. Chapter 7 deals specifically with meditation and deep relaxation.

I have created a guided visualization to connect you with your liver. The purpose is to gain a perception of yourself and your environment viewed from a place where clarity and purity are paramount. This might be a new sense of self, or the strengthening of an existing self. This is the personality that you want to evoke and adopt when you awake between 1AM to 3AM, when the Chinese medicine clock says your body is working with these energies. Also, it is an awareness of self based on purity and cleansing, such as would serve you if you're dealing with chronic liver issues, and will benefit all of us in support of our liver's function at any time of day.

After following this visualization I can place my awareness in my liver. I can hear different bodily signals. From this state of mind I believe I can better pay attention to my liver and its signals, much as you can suddenly hear each word of a muffled conversation once you know what words are being said. And it cannot be denied that you do have sensations in your liver; just ask anyone who's experienced the passing of gall stones.

I sell this audio file, but you can download it for free using the coupon code **IMALIVER19**. This code will discount the price to zero if used before the end of 2019. Listen to this audio file once a day for seven consecutive days. As with all hypnotic audios, only listen when you can give it your full and undivided attention, and when there is no danger if the tape causes you to fall asleep. Do not listen to it when driving. To be taken to the product page for the *Liver Connection* visualization, click the button below.

As always, do only what feels right. Be consistent, educate yourself, and be flexible.



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