

# The Massage Monthly

November 2016 Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

## What is Qi?

A fundamental concept of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) dating back over 3,000 years, qi (pronounced "chee") is the Chinese word for energy, which also carries with it connotations of "air," "breath," and "life force."

In TCM, it is understood that everything from humans and animals to rocks and trees is filled with qi. This energy facilitates function, communication, and connection and is the uniting force of the universe, as well as the animating life force in all objects.

### Qi in the Body

Qi flows through the body via the 14 meridian channels, which run either up

the flow of qi and resulting in energy congestion. Several TCM techniques are designed to clear these blockages and restore balance and flow to the body's energy.

### Working with Qi

Along each meridian are points, known as acupoints or pressure points, where these energy blockages are likely to occur. Significant acupoints are also known as trigger points, and these are often starting points for therapists working to clear congested qi.

An important principle of qi is that clearing blockages at certain trigger points will help restore flow and thus

*He who has health, has hope; and he who has hope, has everything.*

-Thomas Carlyle



Qi is a fundamental concept of traditional Chinese medicine.

or down throughout the body along specific pathways. These pathways deliver energy to organs, structures, and systems in a constant pattern, and when qi is flowing along these meridians a person is said to be in balance.

Illness, injury, stress, and other trauma can cause blockages along these meridians, thus impairing or stopping

impact parts of the body that are connected along the various meridians. For example, this could mean that working on someone's foot might benefit an internal organ like the liver. This concept further illustrates that qi in the body is one balanced system in which one imbalance can affect several

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### Office Hours and Contact

**Ohana Therapeutic Massage**  
**218-263-1501**

#### Fall Hours

**Mon. thru Thurs. 9am-6pm**

**Friday 9am-2pm**

**Sat. 11/19 9am-12pm**

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body parts and even alter emotional states.

### Cultivating Qi

Every person is born with a certain amount of qi, and through our lives we increase it and refill it through breathing, eating, and moving. One specific practice of movement to increase and balance qi is known as qigong, a system of hands-on and hands-off techniques that incorporate timed breathing, gentle movement, meditation, visualization, and more to build and balance qi. This practice can be undertaken with a qigong practitioner or on one's own once schooled in the movements and techniques.

Another movement practice intended to increase and balance the body's energy is t'ai chi, which uses relaxed breathing and rhythmic movements to relax the body and refresh the mind. T'ai chi is not strenuous and can be practiced by people of any age.

### The Cycle of Qi

A TCM practitioner focusing on qi often asks more questions of a client during the intake process than a Western-styled massage therapist. One reason for this is that balancing qi is more than just correcting physical blockages; it is about understanding what may have caused those blockages in the first place and correcting that root cause.

Qi is also linked to elements and seasons in a cyclical way that can become disrupted.

Specific disharmonies or blockages can relate to specific phases, and knowing more about you can allow the practitioner to better assess and understand how best to help rebalance your qi.

### Understanding Qi

For many people familiar with the Western medical tradition, qi is a difficult concept to grasp. Talking with a qigong practitioner or participating in a t'ai chi session are a few ways to gain exposure to the movements and the attitudes surrounding qi, but for some it may take experiencing energy work to

actually come to a better understanding. If nothing else, sitting quietly and focusing on your body can help you appreciate the ancient idea that we are filled with qi running throughout our bodies.

Randy Burgess, a practitioner trained in acupuncture and tui na, uses the following analogy of a boat in the water: "The wind reaches the sail, the sail expands and applies pressure to the mast, and the pressure to the mast moves the boat through the water. The wind isn't qi, the sail isn't qi, the mast isn't, the boat isn't, the water isn't. The qi is where the wind meets the sail, where the sail applies pressure to the mast, where the mast applies pressure to the boat, where the boat slips through the water. If there are holes in the sail, you're going to have qi deficiency; if the mast is weak and moves, it will move the boat forward, but there is deficiency; if there

are barnacles on the hull of the boat, it's not going to slip through the water efficiently, and there is deficiency."



Some ingredients used in traditional Chinese medicine.

# No Pain, No Gain?

## Bodywork Doesn't Have to Hurt to be Effective

Cathy Ulrich

Some people believe massage must be painful to be effective. While some modalities may be intense, this doesn't necessarily translate to a knuckle-biting experience. In fact, painful bodywork can be counterproductive. If you can't breathe comfortably, want to tighten up, make a face, or curl your toes, the technique is too much for you. Your body will go into a protective mode and actually block any positive change.

"No pain, no gain" just doesn't have to apply when it comes to bodywork. Be sure to provide feedback to your practitioner so that you're on the same page. Think of it as a "scale of intensity." On my scale, zero is not touching you and ten is pain--not the worst pain you've ever felt but the place where you want to hold your breath, tighten up, make a face, leave your body. That's a ten.

You shouldn't ever have to be in a pain range to get results, and be sure to let your practitioner know if you're in an

eight or nine range. They may stay at that level if that's where the therapeutic value will be attained, but again, only if it's manageable and you're not tightening up.

And every single client is different. Not only do individuals all start in different places, but their bodies respond differently, and their pain thresholds are extremely varied. What one person finds heavenly, another calls torture.

If it does feel too painful, be sure to tell your therapist. Usually, a practitioner can simply slow down to ease the intensity without losing therapeutic value. Sometimes, if you are nervous or stressed, just remembering to breathe will make your body more open, and you'll remain comfortable.

Bodywork needn't be a test of how tough you are. By giving your therapist appropriate feedback and understanding that painful techniques aren't really helping your body heal, you'll have a

great experience in the session and feel better afterward.



Therapeutic massage actually feels good.

# The Appropriate Portion

## Small Diet Modifications Can Mean Big Changes

Dropping a few extra pounds may mean reversing the voice in your head that sounds suspiciously like your mother telling you to clean your plate. Here's why: eating just one hundred extra daily calories--which may come from finishing everything on your plate, even after you're full--can represent ten added pounds in a year. Conversely, and fortunately, reducing your daily intake by just a small amount can help you manage and even lose weight. Following are a few portion control tips to help you meet your goals.

### Eat at Home

Dine in, and fill your own plate. Studies show that most people serve themselves smaller portions at home, but eat more when someone else fills their plate. Restaurant portions have grown significantly in recent years, in some

cases doubling, and research has directly tied obesity with regular dining out. When you dine at home, serve yourself only what you think you can comfortably eat. Store leftovers in individual serving containers, and freeze them or take them for lunch the next day.

### Slow Down

Pay attention to how fast you're eating. Slowing down helps you eat less and better recognize when you're full. When you dine out, ask your server for a box. If you continue to pick at your plate while talking with friends, you'll soon eat the whole thing without even thinking about it. This mindless eating can account for a lot of calories.

### Divvy up Dinner

Sharing an entree with your dining partner and ordering an extra salad is a

great way to avoid eating a large meal. If you're traveling and dining alone, try an appetizer and salad.

You've heard the reports: Obesity is one of the greatest risk factors for heart disease, degenerative arthritis, and cancer, and it's now epidemic in the United States with an alarming 66 percent of all adults obese.

The good news is watching your portions, slowing down, and being mindful of the food you consume can make a difference. Even your mother would agree, you don't always need to clean your plate.



*For every minute  
you remain  
angry, you give  
up sixty seconds  
of peace of  
mind.*

-Ralph W. Emerson

#### WeGiveBack October Honorees

In November we honor Veterans. These men and women have served our country in ways that no one else has. If anyone deserves to be honored, it's this group of people. We choose to honor Veterans with 25 - FREE 30 minute massage appointments. From November 7th - November 21st, Veterans can receive a FREE 30 minute massage. For more details or to schedule your free 30 minute massage, please call us at 218-263-1501.

#### Upcoming events:

Holiday Shopping Expo - Friday November 4th from 6pm-9pm and Saturday November 5th from 9am-6pm  
Flakey Painting Class - Algonquin Club on December 4th starting at 1pm.

#### Early Bird Special!

They will love your gift of: Back Pain Relief, Headache Relief, Stress Reduction, Better Sleep and Neck Pain Relief with a gift certificate to Ohana Therapeutic Massage! Call us for special pricing (ending November 30th).

## Ohana Therapeutic Massage

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Hibbing, MN 55746



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