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## The Addiction-Willpower Connection

According to acupuncture and Oriental medicine, emotions originate internally from different organs inside the body. Conditions and events in the external world may provoke specific reactions but, ultimately, each person is responsible for the emotion generated. Any addiction, whether to drugs, alcohol, food, work, or other activity or substance, effectively blocks intelligence and suppresses healing abilities. Through these behaviors we choose to rely on the demands of addiction to dictate our lives, rather than taking responsibility to conduct ourselves in a healthy, life-affirming way.



Is there a body/mind connection to willpower? According to the principles of acupuncture and Oriental medicine, there is. Willpower, or "zhi," is said to reside in the kidneys, and the state of the kidney qi directly correlates to the fortitude of our willpower.

The zhi represents willpower, drive and determination. It manifests as the urge to persist in one's efforts and, when in deficiency, feelings of defeat, pessimism and depression may occur. Without strong willpower or zhi, one may easily succumb to the temptations of addiction. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help cleanse and re-balance your body and mind to overcome a variety of addictions, and can help manage cravings. The safe space provided during treatment is both literal and metaphorical.

In Oriental medicine, there is a protective layer around the exterior of the body called Wei Qi, or defensive energy. Nourishing Qi can greatly enhance the body's ability to thrive in times of stress and can aid in healing, prevent illness and increase vitality. Recharging your battery and regeneration of vital energy, Qi, will help you live, look and feel your best!

Several approaches may be used when treating addictions, generally starting with therapies that help cleanse and balance. Sometimes a vague, uneasy sensation takes over after or during the process of releasing an addiction. Perhaps for the workaholic patient, it is strange and alarming to experience leisure time. Addicts require fortitude to find replacements for the dependence on substances or addictive behaviors. This is why willpower, or zhi, needs treatment, to provide support and determination to discover the power within oneself--a universal necessity for overcoming any addiction.

To aid your transformation from addiction and addictive behaviors to healthier practices, try focusing on routine. Routine provides stability, and a new routine is necessary to break old habits. If your first thought in the morning is to reach for a cigarette, replace that action with another, healthier ritual.

The replacement ritual could be anything from reaching for warm water with lemon and a pinch of cayenne to refresh your system, or singing your favorite song or stating out loud your plans for the day. As long as the action is positive and consistent, it will serve your new routine and changing thought processes.

Deep breathing with visualization can also strengthen willpower and be used as a tool to curb hunger and cravings. Most patients report a marked decline in appetite and cravings with acupuncture treatment alone, but special herbs, healing foods and exercises can definitely enhance the efficacy of the treatments.

Everyone experiences addiction in different ways, with varying symptoms, and treatment is adjusted to the

individual needs of the person seeking treatment. Some respond better to a sudden, jarring change in habits, whereas others may require a slower process to adjust to the changes that must be made. At some point during the detoxification process, the next step necessary to your healing will be addressed, helping to ensure that your strengthened willpower and emotional balance lasts a lifetime.

**Are there cravings or an addiction you are working to overcome? Call today to learn how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help you reach optimum health!**

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## Overcome Substance Addiction

Researchers say that acupuncture is a promising treatment for all types of addiction, from cigarettes to heroin.

In one study, a team from Yale University successfully used auricular (ear) acupuncture to treat cocaine addiction. Results showed that 54.8 percent of participants tested cocaine-free during the final week of treatment, compared to 23.5 percent and 9.1 percent in the two control groups. Those who completed acupuncture treatment also had longer periods of sustained abstinence compared to participants in the control groups.

Acupuncture treatments for addiction recovery focus on jitters, cravings, irritability and restlessness-- symptoms that people commonly complain about when they quit. It also aids in relaxation and detoxification.

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## Fight Food Addiction With a Total Health Program

What does it mean to listen to your body, as the expression goes? What if your body is telling you to eat chocolate bars for breakfast, or that fast food makes for an acceptable and tasty dinner? When your mind and body enjoy relative good health, the body's cravings should prove more reliable in discerning which foods to take in for maximum nutrition.



Acupuncture and Oriental medicine not only offers therapies to reduce cravings, such as acupuncture and dietary counseling, but it also explains the nature of these cravings in a simple, eloquent way. Whether you describe your cravings as a longing, hankering, or an urge, it all signifies a possible internal organ imbalance resulting in an addictive, compulsive behavior.

The issues of overeating and low metabolism are addressed with effective tools to control cravings, appetite and increase energy. Energy imbalances are corrected, and the digestive and elimination processes are improved so that there is a physical shift in the body to naturally have more energy and desire less food.

By addressing both the physiological and psychological aspects of weight management concerns, acupuncture and Oriental medicine provide a comprehensive therapy for weight issues that promote better digestion, balance emotions, reduce appetite, improve metabolism and eliminate food cravings.

Each treatment is customized to the needs of the individual patient. Acupuncture points on the body are chosen for overall well-being with the objective of increasing circulation of the blood and Qi to stimulate the metabolism and calm the nervous system. Treatments can include a combination of auricular (ear) and body acupuncture, ear tacks or pellets to leave on between treatments, herbs and supplements, abdominal massage, breathing exercises, and food and lifestyle recommendations.

The treatments chosen for weight management are for promoting healthy digestion, energizing the body, augmenting Qi, and improving elimination of water, toxins and waste products. Acupuncture can help improve digestion, assist with food absorption, and the movement of food through the intestines.

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine are powerful tools for achieving a healthy weight, by itself or as a supportive treatment in conjunction with other weight management programs.

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## Seven Addiction Recovery Tips

In addition to getting treatment, here are seven lifestyle changes you can make to help curb cravings, improve your overall well-being and assist in your recovery.



1. Exercise more. Exercise can reduce your stress and help you relax.
2. Get plenty of fresh fruit and vegetable juices to neutralize and clear the blood and to fortify blood sugar.
3. Carrots, celery, leafy green salads and citrus fruits promote body alkalinity and decrease cravings.
4. Avoid junk food, sugar and coffee. They can upset blood sugar levels and increase blood acidity, which can aggravate withdrawal symptoms.
5. Lobelia tea or green tea can be sipped daily during the detox period to keep tissues flooded with elements that discourage cravings. Lobelia is traditionally used to rid the body of a strong toxin such as a snake bite.
6. Drink water. Research shows that dryness causes cravings. Sip water frequently throughout the day.
7. Practice deep breathing exercises to increase body oxygen and keep calm.

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## Combat Cravings with Ear Massage

Ear Massage is an extremely relaxing and effective therapy aimed at decreasing cravings, reducing stress, promoting well being and addressing various health issues.

Ear acupuncture is used throughout the world to reduce food cravings, assist in the detoxification of addictive substances, manage pain and calm anxiety.

Ear massage triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers. Studies have demonstrated that ear stimulation increases levels of endorphins in both the blood and cerebrospinal fluid.

Here is a great ear massage that you can do for yourself or your loved ones:

1. Rub in small circular motions with your thumbs inside the widest upper part inside the ears, holding them from outside with the index and middle fingers.
  2. Use your index finger to massage inside the smaller crevices if your thumbs don't fit and along the front of your ear where it attaches to the head.
  3. Massage the earlobes by gently pulling them down and making circles with your thumb and index finger
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