

## Maximizing the Metal Energy of Fall

All of a sudden one day there is a nip in the air and the morning sun is a little later. Autumn is the time of year when active yang energy of summer begins to return to the earth, slowly giving way to the time of yin. This mixing of yin and yang results in a vivacious energetic pattern that is clearly reflected in the brilliant, vivid colors of this season. The beauty of seasons exists in your body as well. We are most healthy when we commune with the ways of all that is around us. Right now, honor the release and change.

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. As well as being the perfect time to begin more introspective, indoor projects. In this season, it's time to make sure everything pure and necessary is used and maximized, and that anything unnecessary or wasteful is eliminated. Metal is connected to air through the lungs. The lungs and the large intestine, associated with metal in Chinese medicine, both deal with purification and elimination. The lungs take in oxygen and expel carbon dioxide through breathing. The large intestine absorbs water and completes the absorption of nutrients, minerals and vitamins. It also holds and eliminates waste.

Eating a well rounded diet is necessary for our bodies year-round. However, eating in harmony with the season is also important to keep your metal element in balance.

Make choices that consists of hearty, rich and warm foods with hints of strong flavors like Roquefort, pepper and mustard. Cooking methods that focus the energy of the food in a more inward fashion, such as baking and stewing, are favored. Root vegetables – such as sweet potatoes, carrots, garlic and onion, grains (quinoa, buckwheat), nuts and seeds, which are high in fiber for the Large Intestine, can be rotated back into the diet. Begin to incorporate lighter animal products such as chicken and eggs, for those who are not vegetarian. Cayenne, ginger and curry are wonderful spices that promote good digestion and elimination.

You might also try practicing a form of breathing meditation for the health of your lungs. And weight training is a useful autumn exercise, as it balances the higher amount of protein and calories you crave while preparing for winter. This is a good time of the year to enjoy the late afternoon and evening, the time associated with metal, by relaxing, letting go of the day's concerns and preparing for sleep.

### *Restoring our Metal through Acupuncture*

In the season of autumn, the Metal element is at its peak and particularly amenable to treatment. Fortunately, using the system of Chinese medicine, we can resurrect and rebuild the Metal within us - in its physical expression as well as in mind and spirit. As acupuncturists, we help restore our Metal using needles and their knowledge of energy. We also can help ourselves by learning about the nature of the season and then acting in harmony with its spirit.

# Autumn and Traditional Chinese Medicine

*Autumn is great time to find order and **courage** in what you know, your foundation.*

## **COURAGE:**

The definition of courage is the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, and pain without fear; bravery. To face vicissitudes or changes with self-possession, confidence, and resolution.

### **The Six attributes of courage**

1. Feeling fear yet choosing to act
2. Following your heart
3. Persevering in the face of adversity
4. Standing up for what is right
5. Expanding your horizons; letting go of the familiar
6. Facing suffering with dignity

Use these next few months before the snow settles in to take your courage in both hands and step forth with bravery.

### **For the mind in Autumn:**

- Self evaluation - What are your core values? What kind of life do you want to live? What makes you feel good? What are you ready to see fall away so that you can emerge anew and grow?
- Openness to experience – When open to new experiences, we are more likely to step out on a limb and take chances. We are more likely to accept different options and experience less stress due to our flexibility.
- Conscientiousness – There is a relationship between this trait and a sense of duty. This sense of duty can lead us to take committed action when required.

### **For the body in Autumn:**

- Eat root vegetables, grains (quinoa, buckwheat, brown rice) and hearty foods as a way to clean out the intestines
- Do weight training to make good use of the muscle-building protein you crave as winter comes
- Focus on relaxation in the evening hours. Autumn is associated with late afternoon and evening time, and getting ready for sleep.

### **For the spirit in Autumn**

- Hope – Someone with high levels of hope will have reduced fear as they will view the potential outcome in a more encouraging manner. When dealing with a problem they will likely think of more alternative solutions and will be spurred to take action.
- Resiliency – When set-backs emerge, resiliency allows us to rebound and cope with the struggle. Resiliency gives us courage to not give up despite the challenge.
- Dream Big