

HARMONY IN HEALTH

Embracing Asian Health Practices In The Modern West



Li Duggan
[@li_acupuncture_wellness](#)

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INTRODUCTION

Hello, I'm Li Duggan

I am originally from China where I graduated as a general nurse in 1997 in HanZhong, China. I worked as a Medical, Surgical and Theatre nurse in a Triple-A hospital, the highest standard of medical care in China. By 2005, I was both a nurse and a tutor to newly qualified medical practitioners in the hospital.

I came to Ireland in 2007 and not long after started working as an operating theatre nurse in the Rotunda hospital. I am also a qualified acupuncture and Chinese traditional medicine practitioner. I am a member of the Acupuncture Council of Ireland.

Over the course of my ten-year career in the Rotunda, I became increasingly convinced of the benefits of acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine as a treatment for pain relief, fertility, circulation and aiding the digestive system.



I wrote this ebook to share insights about acupuncture and Asian wellness for a Western audience who may not be familiar with some of our principles.

With this ebook, I hope that you will gain new knowledge and expand your beliefs.

CHAPTER I

Asian vs. Western Health Philosophies

I am someone who has worked for many years in clinical hospital settings in both China and Ireland. I can attest firsthand to the extraordinary achievements of skilled surgeons and doctors. Medical science is continuously moving forward and achieving more consistently amazing results for people with each decade that passes.

However, in China the medical system is more integrated around a philosophy of treating the person holistically and not focusing exclusively on the treatment of a specific source of pain or injury. Although I have worked in operating theatres in both China and Ireland one major differentiator in China was that we would often have a Chinese Medicine ward in the main hospital.

For example, in the triple-A rated hospital in China where I worked for many years, we had a 50-bed traditional Chinese Medicine ward incorporated into the hospital infrastructure alongside the specialisations people are familiar with here in Ireland. In China, there are also entire Hospitals which will have ICU units, but the rest of the hospital may focus only on Traditional Chinese healing methods

such as acupuncture, cupping and TCM herbs.

The vision for my clinic in Ireland was to pair this knowledge and philosophy with my strong clinical background. Therefore, if a client for example comes to me with a persistent knee injury they are reassured that I understand the physiology of their injury. However, my approach to their treatment is similar to my approach to a person who may come to me with an entirely different issue. The reason for this is that while we can use acupuncture treatments to relieve pain, we are equally focused on the root causes of their problem.

We take a much more holistic approach which involves not only solving the immediate source of the pain, but also working on the root causes. This is intended to ensure that healing and preventative measures lead to an overall improvement in long term health. Alongside treating our clients we also try to demonstrate to them how they can take measures or do exercises which will lead to an overall improvement in their general health and thus reduce the chances of issues resurfacing.

CHAPTER II

The Art and Science of Acupuncture

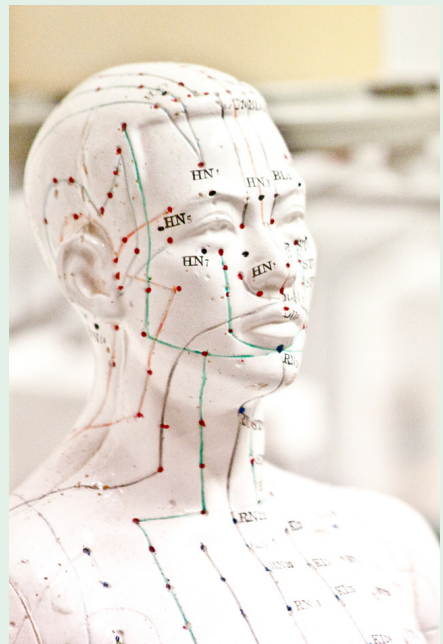
The history of acupuncture

Acupuncture, an ancient therapeutic tradition, originated in China around 3000 years ago. The earliest systematic documentation of acupuncture as a method of diagnosis and treatment can be found in The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine, dating back to 100 BCE. During this period, the established channels of Qi (vital energy or life force) flow were well-defined, likely influenced by a compilation of traditions passed down through generations.

Over time, acupuncture evolved and refined, with increasingly precise insertion points, ultimately becoming a standard practice in China, complementing other healing modalities such as massage, diet, and herbal remedies.

What is Qi?

Qi is a fundamental concept in Chinese philosophy and traditional Chinese medicine, representing vital energy or life force. It flows through specific pathways in the body, influencing overall health. Proper Qi flow is essential for well-being, and disruptions can lead to illness.



East vs. West

I think it's fair to say that Acupuncture is regarded in China as a medical treatment rather than an alternative medical treatment. It is ubiquitous and in the treatment of pain, stress and increasingly fertility, it could be said that it is simply part of the medical system.

In my own clinic as the years have gone by, I have seen the results of our approach time and time again with our clients. I suppose I would say I have two types of clients:

1. The believers
2. The converted

The two types of clients

Ironically, it is the second category of people that are often my biggest advocates. Sometimes these clients have tried everything to get the root cause of their issues and when we treat them successfully they often say 'I wish I had known about you years ago'.

Some of the most effusive testimonials actually come from people who were skeptical when they first came in and then saw the effects of our approach and are converts to it for life, I hope!

Many of my new clients come from referrals and word of mouth from my existing clients. Also in recent years, we are seeing more clients coming to us with fertility issues and just in December of 2023 we have had 5 celebrating a successful pregnancy.

Our clients took a leap of faith and they are now reaping the rewards.



CHAPTER III

Integrating Asian Wellness into Western Lifestyles



Using Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) found in your garden

There are many herbs used in TCM that can be found in Western gardens. An example is red peony roots which can address conditions related to blood stasis and heat. It is also used to invigorate blood circulation, alleviate pain, and regulate menstruation.

Another example is cypress tree leaves which we believe may alleviate pain and promote blood circulation, especially in the scalp. It is a common herb used for alopecia. Another example is white peony roots which may promote circulation and calm the liver. It is often used with other herbs to address issues regarding menstrual irregularities.



Tapping acupressure points

I often spend time with my clients at the end of sessions showing them acupressure points and simple exercises that they need to do at home regularly to help them stay well and get into good habits for example with alignment, posture, and flexibility. I have now started to demonstrate some of these exercises on my social media so that my clients and others can benefit from incorporating these techniques into their daily lives.



Because of cold winters in Western countries, people often get sick with the cold and flu. An example I showed on my Instagram account @li_acupuncture_wellness is the Bladder 2 and it is very easy to find. It's located at the inner side of your eyebrows and right at the end of it, there is a tiny depression. Simply massage this area until it's tender. It can also work well if you have headaches.

Doing simple exercises

We can be very busy with our jobs and our responsibilities at home and this can cause tension in our body. The cold weather is also a culprit and our muscles tend to be unrelaxed. Part of Asian belief is to keep warm and keep moving. Simple exercises can alleviate tension and stress in different muscle groups.



On my Instagram page, I demonstrate these simple exercises devised to relieve stress caused by lifestyle factors. You can find exercises to ease the pain in the neck area, back, and shoulders, as well as menstrual pain, and more.

Stocking your cupboard and fridge with nutritious Asian culinary delights

Aside from TCM, there are other food and ingredients you can buy that are traditionally found in Asian cuisine which you can start incorporating into your meals. Chinese dates are rich in fibre, vitamins, and antioxidants. They are believed to be very good for digestion. And you can make it into tea or put it in your soup.



More on this in the next few chapters and you can also check out our Instagram account for more tips.

CHAPTER IV

Asian Nutrition for Western Palates

A lot of my philosophy towards food is also rooted in this holistic approach. As a child I lived in rural China. We lived a very humble life, but we had a small plot of land behind our home and a huge proportion of the food I ate was grown here. Fruit and vegetables such as beans, aubergine, tomatoes, garlic, melons, onions, sweet potatoes, chillis, Spinach, cabbage, herbs, pakchoi, mushrooms, and ginger my Dad grew it all!

In Spring, summer and early Autumn I would help harvest it, my mother taught me how to prepare it, cook and very importantly how to preserve it so we had a supply during the winter months. Today as part of a busy working household (without a plot farmland behind my house) this is not possible.

However, I still preserve vegetables into a big jar in the kitchen to the eternal confusion of my husband. I am a big believer in seasonality when it comes to vegetables and fruit and tend to adjust my eating habits depending on what is in season and freshest in the Supermarket. I use many of the steaming and fast wok cooking techniques that my mother taught me. I batch cook large amounts for my family because I firmly believe in seeing and preparing the ingredients that goes into our food.





I have talked on my social media about the health benefits of Goji berries and chrysanthemum flowers and some of the other Chinese teas that I consume and which can be simply made at home. I also eat soups that are influenced by the principles of Chinese medicine.

For example, in Ireland, bones are the cheapest item you can probably buy from a butcher, but I would regularly eat vegetables and bone soups. As we get older and bone density and brittleness become an inevitable effect of aging we believe that bone-based broths help fortify and support good bone health.

I hope soon to demonstrate some of the food preparation, ingredients and cooking techniques I use at home on my social media channels so make sure and tune in. Once again, our Instagram is [@li_acupuncture_wellness](#) and we hope to see you there!

CHAPTER V

Mind-Body Harmony

Unveiling the Connection Between Mind and Body with Asian Wisdom

In the midst of our fast-paced Western lifestyles, where the pursuit of balance is ever-present, let's delve into the wisdom of Asian philosophy. These ancient traditions, like Ayurveda, Traditional Chinese Medicine, and practices such as Yoga and Tai Chi, guide us toward a deeper understanding of the intricate link between our minds and bodies.

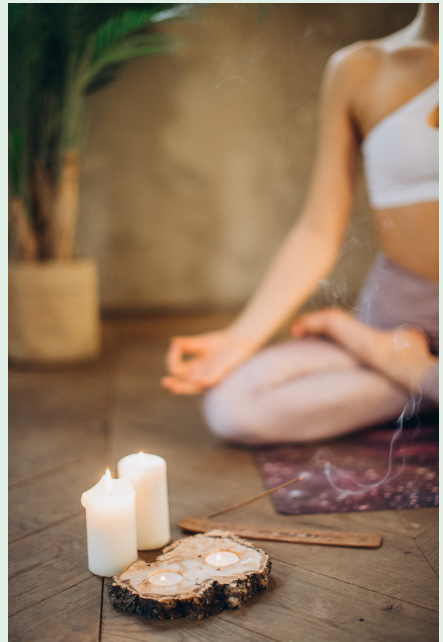
Asian philosophy teaches us that achieving true well-being isn't just about dodging illness. It's about finding that sweet spot where our mental and physical selves dance in harmony, recognising that one greatly influences the other.

Now, let's talk about why maintaining a calm mind is the key to unlocking a healthy body. Our minds act as the command centre for our bodies, orchestrating the symphony of our overall health. When our minds are at ease, our bodies respond with optimal functioning. But introduce stress into the mix, and it's like throwing a curveball that disrupts the entire performance.

Stress, the nemesis of modern living, is a prime example of the mind-body connection. It's not just about feeling overwhelmed; it's about understanding how that mental strain spills over into physical consequences.

It manifests into cardiovascular issues and a weakened immune system. Asian philosophies have been preaching this for ages.

In the realm of Traditional Chinese Medicine, they talk about Qi – the life force energy that keeps our bodies ticking. When stress disrupts our mental equilibrium, it's like a roadblock for this energy flow, resulting in various health challenges.



Similarly, Ayurveda, the ancient Indian healing system, highlights the symbiotic relationship between a peaceful mind and a healthy body.

But fear not! Asian philosophies also come bearing practical solutions. Yoga is like a mind-body rendezvous where you stretch, breathe, and find serenity. Mindfulness, rooted in Buddhist traditions, teaches us to embrace the present without judgment – a game-changer for mental clarity.

And let's not forget Tai Chi – the slow-motion dance that's a workout for both the mind and body. It's a zen-like experience promoting balance and serenity. These practices, inspired by ancient Asian wisdom, offer tangible pathways to achieving mind-body harmony, guiding us toward a more balanced and fulfilled existence.

As we navigate the complexities of modern life, let's draw inspiration from the age-old principles of Asian philosophy. By weaving these timeless practices into our daily routines, we may uncover the secrets to a healthier, happier, and more balanced life.



Thank you and see you soon!

We hope that you found our short and simple ebook very helpful! And that you gained some insights about Asian wellness, philosophies, and how you can practice it in the Western world.

Whether it is in our clinic or on our blog and social media, we hope to see you soon!

Make sure to follow us and interact with us if you have any questions:

LiDugganAcupuncture.ie
[@Li_Acupuncture_Wellness](https://www.instagram.com/Li_Acupuncture_Wellness)

