

NATURAL SYNERGY

EASTERN METABOLISM MIRACLE



Lose Weight While Eating The
Foods You Love Using TCM

Dr. Lin Xiaoxi & Emily J. Parker

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Acupressure is generally safe to use and has little or no side effects. It is always best that people with severe medical issues, such as cancer, heart disease or a chronic condition, consult their local doctor or TCM practitioner before performing acupressure or any other complementary therapy.

Nevertheless, there are certain situations where it is best to avoid acupressure:

- If you have had surgery recently — it is advisable to wait for acute inflammation to resolve. Do not perform acupressure over the surgery area.
- If you have recently suffered a heart attack or stroke
- If you have been diagnosed with cancer
- Burns, wounds, and skin infections — acupressure is contraindicated over wounded, or infected skin
- Varicose veins — pressure over varicose veins can cause severe pain and worsen the problem.
- Bone fractures — do not apply acupressure directly on a fracture spot. Slight pressure on the perimeter can be useful to increase blood flow and promote healing
- If you notice an undiagnosed lump or mass — speak to a physician first to find out what the mass is
- Pregnancy — special precaution, there's a series of points that should not be used in pregnancy for they may put the pregnancy at risk or induce labor

Preface

If you are reading this book specifically for the potent weight management acupressure points, then you may want to skip straight to [Part 2](#) of this book.

If you apply these potent weight-loss acupressure points daily, without changing your diet; you can expect to lose weight. But you will need to commit to your acupressure routine for best results.

If, however, you use these acupressure points along with a stable weight loss diet; then the transformation will obviously happen faster.

Once you have read this book and want to begin acupressure you can [click here](#) or click on the links at the table of contents, or simply scroll towards the end for the **summarized acupressure routines**. These routines are perfect to do straight after the gym, at your desk, or on your commute home from work.

If you are a member of the Natural Synergy system, then it is recommended to use the bio- acoustic meridian frequencies in tandem with your acupressure routine. This can be found in the Natural Synergy App.

Chapter 1, 2 and 3 explains how your body and metabolism processes energy, tips and guides to losing weight, along with a sensible eating outline.

But even if you are a seasoned dieter and have read your fair share of books and articles regarding exercise and diet, you may want to look over Chapters 1,2 and 3 as there might be some pearls of wisdom you didn't know about that will make your road to weight loss easier.

Introduction

“After dinner rest a while; after supper walk a mile.” T. Cogan (1584)

Weight loss is an issue that many people struggle with throughout their lives.

For some, losing weight stems from a desire to look good. For others, weight loss can be a matter of life and death.

Whether you are trying to lose weight to feel confident in your bikini this summer, or battling against an increased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure or diabetes; you probably know there are a mind-boggling selection of weight loss programs available.

From crash diets to intensive exercise regimes and from diet pills to fasting, people will go to great lengths to get the body they want.

But many of these options are expensive, impractical, unsustainable and even unhealthy.

This book introduces a commonsense approach to weight loss, combining a healthy, balanced diet with ancient Chinese wisdom and acupressure techniques to make sure you shed your unwanted weight for good.

We will explore the concepts of metabolism and nutrition and offer practical, everyday advice to get you started on your journey to a slimmer you

Part 1

Chapter 1 - What is Metabolism?

"While weight loss is important, what's more important is the quality of food you put in your body - food is information that quickly changes your metabolism and genes."

Mark Hyman MD

Metabolism is a word we often hear being thrown around, especially with regard to weight loss.

People often claim to have a fast or a slow metabolism. But what does that mean, and is it actually true?

Simply put, metabolism is a series of chemical reactions which happen within our bodies which allows the nutrients from our food to be broken down and turned into energy. Our metabolism also aids the absorption of other useful substances such as vitamins, minerals and amino acids - the building blocks of life.

We need these substances to perform our basic functions as living organisms; growth, repair, and reproduction.

Metabolism can be separated into two components. Catabolism and anabolism.

Catabolism is the breaking down of food into compounds which are useable by the body, for example the breakdown of starches into glucose or proteins into amino acids.

Catabolism is a process which **releases energy**.

Anabolism is the process of rebuilding and repair within the body. Growing, increasing your muscle mass and healing wounds. These are all examples of anabolism in action.

Anabolism is a process which **requires energy**.

- **Energy Use within the Body – Counting Calories**

“Don't compare yourself with someone else's version of happy or thin. Accepting yourself burns the most calories.” Caroline Rhea

The unit of measurement for energy in food and in the human body is calories.

One calorie represents the amount of energy required to heat one gram of water by one degree Celsius.

Some countries list calories expressed as kcal. One kcal (or kilocalorie) is equivalent to 1000 calories.

You take in calories from food which is then released into the body by catabolism. These calories are then used up or “burnt” by anabolic processes and physical exercise.

Calories are essential for your body to be able to function properly. However, any calories which are not used up are stored within the body's cells as sugars or fat. And that means weight gain!

- **Metabolism and Body Weight – A Simple Equation**

Metabolism is one of the key factors which affects weight loss and weight gain.

There is no mystery to how this works. In fact, it is a very simple equation:

Catabolism (i.e. energy release) – Anabolism (i.e. energy use) = weight loss/weight gain

Or to simplify the equation even further:

Calories in – Calories out = weight loss/weight gain

So, if you are taking in more calories than your body can burn on a daily basis, you will quickly put on weight.

If you are burning more calories than you take in, you will lose weight. It really is as straightforward as that!

Diet Soda – the Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

“Tricking your brain into thinking you are getting something sweet plays dirty tricks on your metabolism.” Mark Hyman MD

Many dieters who count their calories drink diet soda in a bid to satisfy sugar cravings.

Although these drinks sound like a good idea, the artificial sweeteners they contain are trick your body into thinking it has consumed sugar (with the exception of stevia). When the body is unable to find the sugar, your insulin levels will spike – resulting in fat production.

So, ditch the diet soda. It is just as bad - if not worse for you than regular soda.

Tip: If you are really attached to drinking soda, a great alternative is drinking soda water with only a splash of fruit juice.

- **Calorie Requirements – Different Bodies, Different Needs**

How many calories you need to take in every day depends on a number of factors such as age, size and gender.

Age

As you grow older, you need fewer calories to carry out your daily anabolic processes. For example, a child or teenager who is still growing will need many more calories than an older person who is fully developed.

People also tend to be less active as they grow older, meaning a reduced need for calories from food.

Beware of the Booze

Your liver plays a big role with your metabolism. Binge drinking (more than 4 drinks a day) causes your liver to work overtime, which slows your metabolism down.

While your liver is busy trying to manage the alcohol in your system, its priority of a healthy metabolism gets put on the backburner. And if you really give your liver a punishing, it may take up to 3 days before your kidneys are back to optimum efficiency.

Size

The bigger your body, the more calories are needed to carry out physical activity, rebuilding and repairs.

Muscle uses more calories than fat, so if you were to compare two people of the same weight, the one with higher muscle mass would burn more calories on a daily basis.

Gender

Men generally burn more calories than women. Again, this is down to size and muscle mass. Men tend to be bigger and more muscular, whereas women are smaller and naturally have a higher proportion of body fat than men.

How Many Calories?

To accurately determine how many calories you need each day, you need to take into account your sex, weight and how much physical activity you do.

However, as a rough guideline, men need 2500cal (10,500 joules) a day to **maintain** their weight and women need 2000cal (8,400 joules).

Important: It is recommended for optimum weight loss not to severely limit your calories. By doing so, your body will go into “starvation mode” and will actually slow your metabolism down in an effort to cling onto your body fat. Instead, try to cut 700-800 calories (3000- 3400 joules) from your recommended daily intake.

So, as a rough guide to lose weight:

- **Men - limit your calories to 1800cal (7,500 joules) daily.**
- **Women - limit your calories to 1200cal (5,000 joules) daily.**

Many celebrity-endorsed diet regimes are simply a calorie counting system that measures your BMI and exercise habits to calculate how much you are allowed to eat.

You can easily do this yourself by doing a Google search for “calorie calculator” – this will give you a laser targeted assessment that will guarantee steady, healthy weight loss.

Coffee Kills the Kilo's

There is good reason why caffeine is added to most weight loss supplements; because it speeds up your metabolism.

Caffeine stimulates the nervous system, which sends signals throughout the body to break down fat cells.

Numerous studies have concluded that coffee speeds up the metabolism, but unfortunately, our bodies can become tolerant to caffeine. So, try not to abuse it.

Drink a cup before you exercise for that energy boost to push yourself harder or drink a cup (without sugar) as an alternative to snacking.

- **Metabolism Myths – Fact vs. Fiction**

“What you want is to rev up your metabolism so that you are burning fat and calories, not preserving fat and calories.” Kathy Freston

So, is it really true that some people have faster or slower metabolisms than others?

The answer is yes... and no.

The speed of your metabolism when you are at complete rest is called your basal metabolic rate (BMR).

This is the minimum amount of energy needed for your body to carry out its most basic functions including breathing, digestion and cell repair.

Your basal metabolic rate is responsible for 40-70% of your daily energy needs. This means that it will be affected by the same factors as your calorie requirements; age, size and gender.

So, while it is true that some people have a higher basal metabolic rate than others, it is not necessarily something predetermined by genetics over which you have no control.

Spice up your Diet with Cayenne Pepper

Cayenne peppers, like many others in the pepper family possess a substance “Capsaicin”. Research concludes that capsaicin is a thermogenic chemical that speeds up your metabolism and suppresses the appetite.

Chili peppers also contain “dihydrocapsiate” – a capsinoid that is similar to capsaicin. Studies revealed that dieters who took dihydrocapsiate supplements for 30 days saw their metabolism rise by 50 more calories a day.

Cayenne pepper has also been clinically proven to lower blood pressure – so if you happen to have hypertension while trying to lose weight, then this spice may be your ticket to optimum health!

Cayenne pepper can cause heartburn or stomach irritation, so start with a low dose to see how your body reacts.

Muscle Matters

You can't change who you are, but you can change your body.

By increasing your muscle mass, you can effectively increase your basal metabolic rate and speed up metabolism and fat loss.

This is why weight training is one of the best exercises for getting in shape and banishing unwanted flab from your life forever.

Males - Mind Your Testosterone

Building muscle mass is especially important for men reaching their 40's and beyond. As men grow older, their natural testosterone levels begin to drop causing muscle mass to drop along with the BMR which equals an increase in fat.

A drop in testosterone for men often means the fat will emerge in unwanted areas around the breast area and under the armpits (man boobs).

One way to fight this is increasing muscle mass through weight training and eating protein with every meal. Added muscle mass will increase their testosterone levels back to a more youthful level – along with your metabolism.

There are foods you can eat that will naturally boost your testosterone.

Vitamin D has been clinically proven to boost testosterone and can be found in foods such as bread. But the best way to get Vitamin D is through sun exposure.

Men need to be aware that there are foods that are high in estrogens; which is the female sex hormone that will counteract your testosterone.

Soy is naturally high in estrogens; including foods made from soy like soy milk or tofu. So, if you're over 40; you might want to switch that soy latte to an almond milk latte if you want any chance of losing those man boobs.

White button mushrooms have been found to be high in a particular phytochemical that inhibits aromatase activity within your body. Aromatase is an enzyme in your body that turns testosterone into estrogen. So, it is important to eat aromatase suppressing food like white button mushrooms to fight estrogen build-up.

Finally, there are artificial estrogens that also zap your testosterone levels. These are called xenoestrogens; and they are mainly found in plastics. These get into your food when you store foods in plastic containers or if you microwave your food in a plastic container. Even exposing your plastic water bottle in direct sun will release these chemicals.

Chapter 2 - To Diet or not to Diet? – A Practical Guide to Healthy Eating for Weight Loss

“The toughest part of a diet isn’t watching what you eat... It’s watching what other people eat.”

You want to lose weight, so what do you do?

Most people's first instinct is to go on a diet. However, there are so many to choose from, picking the right one for you can be both confusing and stressful.

Additionally, many diets are simply unrealistic. They might require the purchase of a number of expensive supplements. Perhaps they require preparing complicated meals several times a day. Maybe they advise you to stop eating certain foods, or even to stop eating altogether!

Crash and fad diets may be effective in the short-term. However, cutting out whole food groups is difficult to keep up with. As soon as you start eating normally again, the weight will surely creep back on, ruining all your hard work.

The most important thing to consider when choosing a weight loss diet is finding something that will be practical and sustainable in the long-term.

Banning yourself from certain foods rarely works either.

Many people find that as soon as they tell themselves they can't have something, it's all they can think about. Finally, they give in to their cravings and often end up eating more than they would have if they'd allowed themselves an occasional treat in the first place.

Of course, there are certain foods you should cut down on. You don't need an expensive diet book to tell you that too much fat and sugar will cause you to pile on the pounds.

But if you really love these foods, you don't necessarily need to torture yourself by quitting them completely. As long as you stick to your daily weight loss acupressure routine, you *can* “have your cake and eat it too”

If you often forget to do your weight loss acupressure routine, but your overall diet is balanced and healthy, then having a small treat once or twice a week isn't going to break the bank. Moderation is the key!

The Bread & Butter Plate Diet

“Once you have to start counting calories, it takes away from the joy of eating.”

Mireille Guiliano

Serving sizes are a big contributing factor to weight gain. So instead of serving your dinner on a regular sized dining plate; use a bread & butter plate instead.

With the bread & butter plate diet; as long as you aren't constantly eating high fat meals, you won't need to bother about counting calories.

In the beginning, you will be tempted to pile your plate a little higher – and you are allowed to. But after a while, you will grow tired of trying to prevent your meal spilling-over and will become accustomed to eating off a smaller plate and will start to subconsciously serving yourself more sensible portions.

This simple trick may be the only sacrifice you need to make in order to meet your weight goals.

So, when planning a weight loss diet, the most important thing is to be practical.

Start off slowly, and reduce your overall calorie consumption by making sensible substitutions to the unhealthy foods in your diet. Eat a healthy, balanced diet, and don't let yourself go hungry.

- **The Basic Principles of Healthy Eating – The Minimum Everybody Needs to Know**

“Never eat ingredients you can't pronounce. Except quinoa. You should eat quinoa.”

Familiarize yourself with the basic principles of healthy eating and use these to make wise decisions about your diet.

Eat more fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are low in fat and high in fiber, vitamins and minerals essential for health. Try to eat a variety of fruit and vegetables of different colors every day to make sure you're getting a balance of all the nutrients you need.

Don't Taint Your Vegetables with Plastic!

In this fast paced world we live in, dieting can be tough. Many of us just don't have the time to pre-prepare our meals. So, we take a few shortcuts where we can.

Many dieters choose a quick way to get their vegetables – with microwavable plastic bags of veggies.

The idea seems even more attractive when the tagline on the packet says “the steaming process retains all of the vitamins and minerals”

But what you are really doing is – infusing toxic chemicals from the microwaved plastic into your food.

Even if the plastic container says “microwave safe” - it isn't. Always use a plate or ceramic bowl.

Secondly, cooking with microwaves completely damages the molecular structure of the food you are heating up. This confuses the body to store fat rather than using the food for energy.

Base your meals around (non processed) starchy foods

The bulk of your energy should come from starchy food. This includes whole grains such as brown rice or buckwheat, whole meal pasta, whole meal bread or potatoes (sweet potatoes are best).

Eat more fish

You should eat two portions of fish every week, one of which should be oily fish. Oily fish contains essential fatty acids (Omega-3's) which help to keep your heart and blood vessels healthy as well as playing an important role in brain and cell function.

Wild caught is vastly better than farmed fish.

Choose fresh

When grocery shopping - try to choose items that don't come pre-packaged. If it doesn't come in a plastic container or packet, then it's likely healthy.

Avoid processed

Processed foods are terrible for your health and waistline. They are laden with chemicals, additives, free radicals, trans-fats and preservatives. These added ingredients are foreign to your body and often confuse your body into storing fat.

Once again, if your food comes pre-packaged with a long list of ingredients – then it's processed and deemed unhealthy.

Eat less salt, processed sugar and processed fat

Reduce these harmful additives in your diet to help to keep your heart and blood pressure healthy, your blood sugar stable and your waistline slim.

Remember the difference between processed and natural. It is good to have some natural fats in our diet such as eggs, avocado and olive oil, or coconut oil.

Avoid over-processed oils

It is hard to decipher what oils are good for us when marketing teams use clever wording and “spin” to make unhealthy food items seem healthy. Because of this, you should always be suspicious when a processed, packaged food that is emblazoned with taglines such as “heart smart”, “heart healthy”, “waistline friendly” and “natural” to name just a few.

There are some terrible oils on the market that are making us fat while killing us slowly. Many common vegetable oils are actually toxic and contain between 0.56 to 4.2% trans-fats.

Some of these oils are laden with free radicals that cause heart disease, high blood pressure and cancer.

Here is a list of the worst offenders:

- **Canola Oil:** High in trans-fats, canola oil used to be called “rapeseed” oil until studies showed that it caused heart damage with animal testing. Rapeseed crops are nearly exclusively GMO crops which means they have been subjected to heavy doses of pesticides.
- Sunflower Oil
- **Rapeseed Oil:** See Canola Oil
- Sesame Oil
- **Soybean Oil:** More often than not, when you see something labelled: “vegetable oil” it is actually oil made from soybeans. Soybeans are rich in the fatty acid Omega-6, which is good for you in moderation. But because of the abundance of Omega-6 in processed foods, we are getting too much of it which can cause cardiovascular disease, cancer and a host of auto-immune diseases. Soybeans are naturally high in estrogens which are a female hormone that will decrease testosterone in older men. Soybean oil comes from GMO soy. The soybean industry is dominated by the company Monsanto – which has one of the worst records for sacrificing people’s health for profit
- Rice Bran Oil
- **Grape Seed Oil** - often touted as “healthy” but it is quite the opposite.

- **Corn Oil:** Is also high in Omega-6 fatty acids and is highly processed through an extraction process using hexane. Corn oil is almost exclusively produced using GMO corn which means the corn has been subjected to powerful pesticides that are toxic to your health.
- Safflower Oil

As stated earlier, stick with extra virgin olive oil or coconut oil for cooking.

Drink more water

Drinking enough water is important to allow your body to perform its vital functions. By replacing sugary, soda drinks for water you can also reduce your intake of calories throughout the day.

Did you know that hunger and thirst are controlled by the same part of the brain?

Sometimes the signals can get confused, so next time you feel peckish between meals, try drinking a glass of water before reaching for the snacks.

You might find this is enough to satisfy your cravings.

Before you have dinner...

You probably know that it takes up to 20 minutes for your stomach to signal to the brain that it's full. With that in mind, drink a large glass of water 20 minutes before dinner. That way when it's time to eat - your stomach will be partially full, and you won't feel like eating as much.

Health professionals commonly recommend everyone drinks at least 8 glasses of water a day (1/2 gallon or 2 liters), so this is a perfect opportunity to try and meet that target.

Cold Water to Lose Weight

German research has concluded that people who drink 6 or more glasses of cold water a daily were able to elevate their resting metabolic rate by 50 calories per day. If you can keep it up, it will result in the loss of 5 pounds for the year.

Choose Healthier Cooking Methods

Even changing the way you cook your foods can make a big difference to the amount of calories you consume every day. Vegetables should be steamed or stir-fried to preserve nutrients and meat and fish should be grilled to allow excess fat to drain away.

Beware of over-processed cooking sauces. When cooking an Asian stir-fry, it is easy to forget that the unhealthiest part of the dish is that delicious salty sweet sauce. No matter what ethnicity you eat: Chinese, Thai, Japanese, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Malaysian or Korean... These sauces are full of sugar (often high fructose corn syrup) MSG, trans-fats, sodium, artificial coloring and preservatives.

That doesn't mean you shouldn't use those delicious sauces – just be mindful that too much of it can quickly turn a healthy meal into an unhealthy meal. Always look at the ingredients before you buy; as some sauces are worse than others.

What's hidden in the Sauce?

When looking at the ingredients on the back label, it's a good sign if the ingredients are words you can pronounce and recognize.

If sugar (or high fructose corn syrup) is listed at the top (or near the top) of the ingredients list, then you can be assured that the sauce is a sugar-laden calorie bomb.

If your favorite sauce happens to be on the “naughty list” – try not to add it in your cooking too liberally.

- **Know your Nutrients – The Essential Components of a Healthy Diet**

A healthy diet doesn't just mean eating less, but also eating the right foods to provide you with all the nutrients you need to sustain yourself, while working towards a body shape that you feel happy with.

In addition to energy in the form of calories, there are several other important nutrients that we need for our diets in order to be healthy.

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are the most important source of energy from our food. Carbohydrates contain starch which is broken down by digestion into glucose - a form of sugar which is readily available to power physical activity and anabolic processes throughout the body.

Many people view carbohydrates as an enemy to weight loss and try to cut them out of their diets.

However, carbohydrates are a vital component of a balanced diet as they provide us with the fuel that our bodies need to effectively carry out all of their vital functions.

Snack on Air Popped Popcorn

Air popped popcorn is a great snack if you are on a diet. It is high in fiber (which is great for weight loss) and it counts as part of your daily wholegrain requirements.

Instead of your usual popcorn flavorings like butter or salted caramel, reach for calorie free alternatives like cumin salt, cayenne pepper or cinnamon.

One cup of air-popped popcorn is only 31 calories, has a low glycemic index; which means you will stay fuller for longer.

Air popped popcorn is a great substitute for snacking on rice cakes. Rice cakes are fat free; but have a high glycemic index.

Just be sure to only eat “air popped” and not the type you get at the movie theatre or microwavable popcorn.

People who cut carbohydrates from their diet are trying to force their body to use an alternative energy source (fat) to power their body. This results in low energy and adversely affects the brains ability to think properly. Low carb dieters also complain of never feeling the satisfaction of “being full” – which leads to constant snacking.

Rather than cutting out carbohydrates completely, try to make wiser choices.

Choose whole grains which provide a slow and steady release of energy and keep you feeling full for longer, rather than refined or processed varieties which can leave you unsatisfied and craving more.

Choose brown rice, over white, and wholegrain brown bread over processed white bread.

When choosing bread products; always look at the ingredients first. The shorter the list of ingredients the healthier it is. If the list of ingredients is long – then chances are that the bread is full of preservatives and is over-processed.

Wholegrain varieties of foods haven't had the fibrous husk of the grain removed. Thus, the food retains all the vitamins, minerals and fiber.

Generally speaking, the more fiber a food contains, the more slowly it is digested and the more slowly its energy is released into the body. This is called the glycemic index (GI).

Choosing lower GI foods is an effective way to naturally reduce your weight and benefits certain medical conditions such as diabetes.

So you can immediately make some healthy modifications to your diet just by swapping out white bread for whole meal or switching to sweet potatoes instead of regular potatoes and swapping white rice for brown.

Some healthy sources of carbohydrates include:

- Whole grains and cereals e.g. brown rice, oats, buckwheat
- Whole meal bread and pasta
- Beans and Lentils
- Vegetables
- Fruit
- Nuts and seeds

Some unhealthy sources of carbohydrates which should be avoided are:

- Refined sugars (high fructose corn syrup).
- Cakes and cookies and candy
- Sugary drinks and soda

- White bread,
- White rice
- White pasta
- Chips, French fries and crackers
- Pastries

Sugars

Over the last 30 years or so, fat was demonized as the source of the obesity epidemic – while sugar was left to tighten its grip on our diets.

Nowadays, the truth is that sugar is the real menace.

There are many different forms of sugar. Some are much better than others. Refined sugars like high fructose corn syrup are void of all nutritional value - unlike natural sugars you will find in fresh fruit.

Our body hates lab-created sugars like high fructose corn syrup and finds it hard to process, so these sugars often get stored as fat when they should have been used for energy.

Fruit Juice – Friend or Foe?

Don't be fooled into thinking drinking fruit juice is a healthy alternative. First of all, nature intended fruit juice to be enjoyed as you *eat* the fruit. When you *eat* fruit, you get all of the nutrients, minerals and fiber. The high sugar content in most fruits won't spike your blood sugar levels because most people only eat one piece of fruit at a time.

But when you drink a glass of apple, orange juice or pineapple juice - it is the equivalent of eating 15 pieces of fruit in one sitting. This type of sugar intake is not natural.

Another reason to skip fruit juice is that the juice is highly processed.

Freshly squeezed juice doesn't stay fresh for very long. So when the juice is extracted in the factory; it needs to be preserved so it can be stored for a long time.

They do this by turning the juice into a concentrate; by adding lab-created sugars like high fructose corn syrup and preservatives. This reduces the juice into a syrup-like substance that only needs water added to be sold for consumption.

Drinking these types of fruit juices is the equivalent of drinking a can of soda pop.

As mentioned earlier, you should always choose carbohydrates with a low glycemic index. Low GI foods release energy slower which keeps you satisfied for longer and won't spike your insulin levels.

Sugar is a carbohydrate with a high glycemic index (high GI). High GI foods cause our insulin levels to spike which causes a high level of fat in our blood. This results in weight gain and the risk of diabetes.

Protein

Protein is a vital nutrient required for the growth and repair of cells, muscles and organs.

Protein is broken down by catabolism into amino acids. These are essential for many of the processes needed to keep the body's systems functioning from day to day. Amino acids protect the heart and nervous system and are used to synthesize hormones within the body to name just a few of their functions.

Some of these amino acids can be made within the body, but the others must come from your diet.

A few foods, including animal products, soy beans and quinoa contain all of these amino acids, but most foods contain only a small proportion of what you need. This is why it is important to eat a varied and balanced diet including different fruits and vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds and dairy products as well as meat and fish.

Some foods which are good sources of protein are:

- Lean meat
- Fish
- Eggs
- Dairy products
- Soya products e.g. tofu
- Beans and lentils
- Nuts and seeds

Fat

Some fat is essential in the diet. It is a good source of energy and helps the brain and nervous system to function properly. Healthy fats build cell walls and transport certain vitamins around the body.

Some foods which are high in healthy fats are:

- Oily fish e.g. mackerel, salmon, sardines
- Avocado
- Nuts and seeds
- Peanuts

- Olives
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Coconut oil
- Egg yolks

However, it should come as no surprise that too much fat can be bad for you.

Trans-fats, which are in a lot of processed foods and fast foods, cannot be dissolved by the body - should be limited to an occasional treat.

They increase the amount of cholesterol in the blood which leads the arteries to become clogged and narrowed and increases the risk of heart disease.

The amount of saturated fat in the diet should be reduced as much as possible. Be sure to limit fatty and creamy foods such as butter, lard, cream and ice-cream.

Choose lean meat, remove any excess fat before cooking, and choose healthier cooking methods such as grilling which allows some of the fat to drain away.

Try to take in most of your fats from plant sources, fish or eggs. These fats are unsaturated and can be broken down far more easily into products which are useful to your body.

Foods high in saturated fats which should be limited:

- Fatty meat
- Sausages
- Bacon

- Lard
 - Butter
 - Cheese
 - Cream
 - Ice cream
 - Chocolate
 - Palm oil
 - Cakes, cookies and pastries
-

It's sometimes not what you eat, but how you eat it.

“Joe” was a 37 year old construction worker who was complaining about his struggles with losing weight.

His problem was revealed when he was eating dinner at a wedding – Joe was a very fast eater.

It turned out that Joe grew up at a boarding school. His fast eating skills developed as a young student because older students would steal meat or dessert off your tray if you didn't eat it fast enough.

As he became an older student, the incentive to eat quickly changed as older students who finished first had a chance of getting a second serving.

This habit carried-on as he became an adult.

He would barely chew his food, and would empty his plate as if it was a competitor sport.

After this was pointed out to him, in the following months, he began to make an effort to chew his food thoroughly and eat slowly.

By doing so, he often found that he “felt satisfied” before finishing his meal, and began to leave some food on his plate.

The constant heartburn he used to get cleared up and within 6 months.

Joe lost 35 pounds.

Vitamins

Vitamins are important nutrients from food which are responsible for performing different functions in the body. Each vitamin has a chemical name, but they are usually known by a letter.

Different foods contain different levels of these nutrients. The following chart as a quick reference tool.

Vitamin	Function in the Body	Food Sources
A	Keeps eyes and skin healthy Protects against infections	Orange, yellow and dark green vegetables Liver, milk, butter, cheese, eggs, oily fish
B (There are several different B vitamins. Together they are known as B complex)	Releases energy from other nutrients Essential for a healthy nervous system	Meat, dairy products, eggs Cereals, pulses, nuts and seeds, yeast and yeast extract

C	Helps body absorb iron Produces connective tissue Antioxidant (protects against damage from harmful chemicals)	Fruit and vegetables especially citrus fruit such as oranges, blackcurrants, capsicums and leafy green vegetables
D	Helps body absorb calcium Keeps bones, teeth and nervous system healthy	Most of our vitamin D comes from sunlight but small amounts are found in meat, oily fish, eggs, butter and margarine
E	Keeps cell walls healthy Antioxidant	Vegetable oils, nuts and seeds and leafy green vegetables
K	Aids blood clotting and wound healing after an injury	Leafy green vegetables and vegetable oils, cereals Cheese, Liver, Bacon

Vitamins A, D, E and K are fat soluble. This is why we need a small amount of fat in our diets, to transport these essential vitamins around the body.

Vitamin A is stored in the liver and too much can actually be dangerous. Take extra care if you take supplements which are high in vitamin A, such as fish oils.

Vitamins B and C are water soluble. When you boil food in water, it loses a lot of these nutrients. Steaming and stir-frying are better ways of cooking vegetables in order to preserve their precious vitamins and get the most out of your food.

Minerals

Like vitamins, minerals perform a number of important functions throughout the body.

Mineral	Function in the Body	Food Sources
Calcium	Helps bones and teeth grow and keeps them healthy and strong Helps blood clotting Allows nerves and muscles to function effectively	Milk and other dairy products, cereals, nuts and seeds, pulses, leafy green vegetables
Fluoride	Protects against tooth decay	Sea-water fish, tea
Iron	Forms hemoglobin in red blood cells which carry oxygen around the body	Red meat, offal, black pudding, eggs leafy green vegetables, cocoa, black treacle
Magnesium	Aids absorption of other vitamins and minerals by the body Regulates blood pressure	Leafy green vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds, cereals, fish
Phosphorus	Along with calcium makes teeth and bones stronger	Found in most foods
Potassium	Regulates water levels in body and blood pressure Essential for healthy nervous system and muscle function	Found in most foods, especially vegetables
Sodium	Regulates water levels in body and blood pressure Controls nerve and muscle function	Salt, processed foods, pickles, olives, anchovies, salted meats, bread

Fiber

Fiber is not technically a nutrient, but is an essential component of a healthy diet.

Fiber is a form of carbohydrate. But unlike other carbs, our body has trouble digesting fiber which results in it passing through our system without spiking our blood sugar levels.

It not only helps food to pass through the digestive system more efficiently, preventing problems such as constipation, but also gives a feeling of fullness that lasts which helps you to avoid the temptation of unhealthy snacks between meals.

Eating more fiber may be the single best weight loss tip above all diet plans:

A recent article published: Harvard Health Publications:

<http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/making-one-change-getting-fiber-can-help-weight-loss-201502177721>

Two sets of subjects were given different diet plans. The first set simply added more fiber to their diets.

The second set followed the diet plan recommended by the American Heart Association.

The test subjects that followed the American Heart Association diet lost the same amount of weight as the test subjects who simply added more fiber to their diets.

How much fiber is too much? There is no upper limit - as it is very difficult to eat fiber to the point where it is dangerous for your health. Eating too much in one sitting can have uncomfortable temporary side effects such as stomach cramps, bloating and gas. Drinking at least eight glasses of water daily will also help combat the risk of the mild side effects.

High fiber foods include:

- Whole grains and cereals
- Whole meal bread
- Fruit and vegetables
- Beans and legumes

Chapter 3 - Reaching Your Target, Step by Step

- **Realistic Targets - Setting Goals You Know You can Achieve**

“Failure is not falling down but refusing to get up.” Chinese Proverb

When you first begin a weight loss diet, it's crucial that you set realistic goals that you know you can stick to. Jumping straight in at the deep end and completely giving up a food you love is hard.

So set yourself goals that you know you can achieve. This way you stand a much higher chance of success. This allows you to feel good about yourself and stay motivated when setting your next target.

A realistic diet also has a greater chance of becoming a lifestyle rather than a fad.

For example let's say you love chocolate. Let's say you eat a bar of milk chocolate every day.

In the first week, you could decide to replace that bar of milk chocolate with two squares of good quality, high percentage (70%+) dark chocolate.

Not only is dark chocolate lower in fat and sugar, but it has a higher cocoa content, so you feel satisfied with less.

Week 1; *You're still eating chocolate every day, but you've already cut down the quantity and made a healthier choice for yourself.*

That was easy! So now set yourself your next goal.

In the second week you decide to only eat your two squares of chocolate every other day.

Now this takes a bit more willpower, but you've already succeeded at your first goal. You know you can do it!

Week 2; *You can still eat chocolate, but you've decreased your intake by half. And it wasn't even that hard!*

By the third week, you might find that you're not even craving chocolate any more. But if you are, just carry on setting yourself realistic targets and cutting down little by little, step by step.

And if you fall off the wagon, don't beat yourself up! You're only human after all. Just put it down to a temporary hiccup and pick up where you left off.

"The temptation to quit will be greatest just before you are about to succeed."

Chinese Proverb

Remember: The pain of eating less chocolate now is far less than the pain of not reaching your weight targets as the summer begins.

- **Keeping a Food Journal – Logging your Way to a Lighter You**

“If you bite it, write it!”

Another good place to start is keeping a food journal.

Sometimes we wonder why we can't lose weight when we've been eating three healthy meals a day.

It's all too easy to forget about that fatty latte on the way to work or those cookies that were just sitting in the office after lunch, begging to be eaten.

Keeping a food journal is a good way to become more conscious of these things and either cut them out completely or switch them for healthier options.

Write down everything that you eat and drink and try to list the portion size if you can. It's best to do this at least daily so that you don't forget and miss anything out.

And remember, your food journal is just for you. You don't need to show anyone else unless you want to, so be honest and include everything. Otherwise you'll only be fooling yourself!

Try to keep your journal for at least a full week, while eating normally. Then, at the end of the week sit down and highlight any potential problem areas and think about how you can improve them.

If you have gone to the trouble of writing a food journal, make the effort to Google search the calories of each meal. That way you can gain an understanding of how many calories you are consuming, then make the necessary changes (be sure to Google search your changes to make sure they fall below your recommended daily calorie intake).

If you find the food journal a useful tool, continue using it for as long as you need to. You can also keep a record of any physical exercise you do.

There are a host of free calorie counting apps you can download to your phone. That way you can calculate your calorie consumption throughout the day, and will know for sure if you really have earned that treat after work.

By using your journal to replace high fat and high sugar foods with healthier alternatives, you can develop a diet which will lead to steady and sustainable weight loss without making you feel like you're depriving yourself.

Below is an example of a day in an average person's food journal with suggestions for healthier meals.

Meal	Current Choice	Healthy Substitution
Breakfast	Two sausages and fried eggs on white toast with butter	Two slices of lean, grilled bacon and poached eggs on whole meal toast with no butter
Morning snack	Chocolate muffin and full-fat latte	Piece of fruit and “skinny” latte using skimmed milk
Lunch	Tuna mayonnaise sandwich, potato chips, can of cola	Tuna and salad tortilla wrap using low-fat mayonnaise, a small handful of nuts, water
Dinner	Pepperoni pizza, can of cola	Small bowl of spaghetti Bolognese made with extra vegetables, topped with a small sprinkling of parmesan cheese, soda water with a dash of fruit juice
Dessert	Ice cream	Low-fat natural yogurt with berries

- **Exercise – Hit the Gym, Kick the Kilos**

“Don’t find the time to exercise, make the time to exercise.”

The best way that you can boost your metabolism and aid weight loss is by increasing your muscle mass.

This means exercises such as weight training are one of the best ways to fight flab and get in shape.

One thing to bear in mind is that muscle is denser than fat. If you rely solely on the scales as a measure, while building muscle it may seem like your weight is staying the same, maybe even increasing!

That's why it's important to measure your waistline and other problem areas before you start your exercise regime, take photographs too and use these as a guideline instead.

Couple your weight training with some cardiovascular exercise such as running; walking or aerobics to burn more calories and melt away fat.

Remember when you exercise; the faster your heart beats, the faster you will burn calories. Meaning a slow leisurely walk won't do much for your waistline.

Always consult a professional before starting a new exercise regime. They can help you to set realistic targets for your body type and ability and check your technique to make sure you are not risking injury.

Don't be afraid of the weights ladies!

Despite years of trying to dispel the myth that women “*should only do cardio workouts*” - women are still hesitant of weight training.

A lot of women still think that if they do weights at the gym, they will one day, wake up looking like a man.

In reality, muscle isn't *that* easy to put-on. In fact, many men struggle to put muscle-on despite heavy weight training and being naturally loaded with testosterone.

Because women have very low testosterone, there is no risk of suddenly “bulking up”.

Weight training raises your BMI. And it also strengthens your bones – which is very important for women in their advancing years.

The many benefits of weight training will soon make you wonder why you wasted so much time on the treadmill.

Weigh to Go

Try to avoid the temptation to weigh yourself every day.

You weight fluctuates naturally on a day to day basis depending on a number of factors. Weighing yourself daily can result in serious disappointment if you've been working really hard only to find you've gained a pound.

This type of disappointment may put you in a terrible mood that can only be cheered-up with ice cream, cookies or chocolate. Or worse, cause you to give up on your weight goals all together.

Try to limit weighing sessions to once weekly and be sure to do it at the same time daily, wearing the same, or better still, no clothes. This should reduce the possibility of variations and give a truer indication of your progress.

Many health professionals will tell you not to weigh yourself at all. Instead, choose to assess yourself in the mirror or by your clothing size.

High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)

If weight training just isn't your thing, there is another great option, and it is perfect for those who are time-poor.

High intensity interval training (HIIT) is a perfect way to burn fat. And just like weight training, your metabolism burns strong well after the workout has finished.

HIIT involves intense intervals of exercise at your utmost limit – followed by a short rest.

The intensity of HIIT depends on how far you are prepared to push yourself.

The “3 minute workout” is real - and 2 thirds of the workout is rest time!

But the three (20-second) sets will HURT.

If you are prepared to push your body to its utter limit for 20 seconds followed by a minutes rest for 3 sets – **your entire workout will be over in 3 minutes**. As convenient as it sounds, be warned that this workout is going to HURT... but HIIT's health benefits combined with its convenience factor is hard to ignore.

Research from the University of Glasgow, Scotland documented study participants who were served a fat-laden fried breakfast with the intention of measuring the fat content in the participant's blood

Half of the test participants were later subjected to three (20 second) sets on the cycle machine at their physical limit.

The other half did their regular gym workout.

The blood drawn from the participants later that day was spun in a centrifuge to separate the fat from the plasma and platelets.

The research revealed that the HIIT participants had only minor traces of fat in their blood samples. This was compared to the participants, who did their regular workout; who had high levels of fat in their blood samples.

If you can't hack a super intense workout, you can "dial it down" a little... but this will extend the duration of your (HIIT) workout.

For example; if you are a jogger, you can jog at your regular pace for 2 minutes... then switch to a medium paced sprint for 30 seconds... then walk for a minute. Once your minute walk is over; back to the 2 minute jog; then 30 second sprint; then 1 minute walk again. This type of 20 minute HIIT workout (daily) is sufficient for weight loss.

HIIT is a great weight loss strategy because it can be used with an infinite array of exercises.

Caution: Seek advice from your health professional before beginning HIIT.

Sleep Yourself Thin

A good night's sleep is vital for effective weight loss and lack of it can sabotage all your good intentions when it comes to exercising and eating right.

When you're sleep deprived, the hormones that control hunger and cravings become out of balance meaning that you're far more likely to make bad food decisions throughout the day.

Lack of sleep also means lack of energy, so you'll be less motivated to work out, and when you do, you'll have less stamina to burn those all important calories and shed the pounds.

You should aim for at least seven hours daily to benefit fully, so make early nights a priority and take another step towards the body of your dreams.

Part 2

Chapter 4 - Metabolism and Weight Loss – A Traditional Chinese Medicine Perspective

In this book, there will be some references to “qi”. Qi (pronounced “chi”) can be roughly translated as “vital energy” or “life force”. Qi is called “ki” in Japan, “prana” in India, and “mana” in some Polynesian cultures.

It flows through our meridian system, allowing our lungs to breathe, our muscles to move and our hearts to beat. It is what animates us and keeps us alive.

Our state of well-being is highly dependent on the state of our energy flow (qi), and this is what we are trying to regulate when we use acupressure or acupuncture.

The Meridian System – Your Personal Communications Network

According to Chinese medicine, your qi flows around your body through very fine channels called meridians.

These meridians are like rivers, and your qi should move through them freely, nourishing every cell, muscle and tissue as it goes.

However, sometimes, like a river, the meridians can become blocked or dry. Perhaps a physical injury, lifestyle or diet has prevented the smooth flow of qi or maybe there is simply not enough qi to move as it should. This is when disease or physical imbalances occur such as weight gain – or weight gain in the wrong places.

There are twelve main meridians, one for each of the organs. As well as having a deep pathway connecting with their respective organ, each meridian is accessible from the surface of the body,

at the acupressure points. These acupoints are like train stations dotted along a train line (your meridian lines). Some experts explain acupoints as “little whirlpools of energy”. This forms a complex communications system throughout the entire body.

These special points along the meridian lines are the places where we can access stagnant qi or a restricted flow of qi

There are a number of ways we can stimulate these “little whirlpools of energy” (acupoints) in order to restore a free flow of qi. Some of these methods are, acupuncture, electro-acupuncture, specific sound frequencies and acupressure.

By clearing energy blockages we are able to restore a smooth flow of energy and return our body to its natural state of health.

- **The Stomach – The “Food Processor” of the Body**

In Chinese medicine the Stomach is known as “The official in-charge of rotting and ripening”.

This strange title makes more sense when you look at the digestive process in detail.

Once food arrives in the Stomach, it is broken down into a soupy substance by a combination of powerful acid and a mechanical churning action, much like a food processor.

This breaking down or “rotting” of food allows its nutrients to be released into the intestines where digestive enzymes begin the process of catabolism. This releases energy and other vital compounds from the digestive soup and “ripens” them, making them available for use within the body.

- **The Spleen – The Powerful Transformer**

The Spleen is “The official in-charge of transformation and transportation”.

It works closely with the Stomach to release the nutrients from food and transport them around the body to where they are needed.

The role of the Spleen in Chinese medicine may seem quite unusual when compared with western medical science. This is because in Chinese medicine the role of the Spleen and the pancreas are all rolled into one.

The pancreas is a gland which secretes insulin, one of the most important hormones involved in metabolism.

Insulin is responsible for controlling the levels of sugar in the blood and is the hormone which people with diabetes are either lacking or resistant to.

Insulin also plays a role in the storage of fat in the body. According to Chinese medicine, being overweight one classic sign of a Spleen deficiency.

- **How to Tell if your Stomach and Spleen are Sick**

So how do you know if your Stomach and Spleen are not functioning as they should?

Some of the signs and symptoms are obviously connected to these two organs' roles in digestion, but with others, the connection is less clear.

Symptoms such as indigestion and heartburn can be put down to the Stomach not descending food into the intestines as it should.

Sometimes too much acid is produced by the Stomach, resulting in anything from mild discomfort to severe pain. This can happen due to overeating or eating foods which irritate the Stomach, such as very spicy or greasy foods.

It can also be due to a physical problem with the Stomach itself. The valve which separates the Stomach from the esophagus may not close properly, or half-digested food and acid can be forced out by too much pressure on the Stomach, for example if you are very overweight or pregnant.

According to Chinese medicine, many oral health issues including mouth ulcers, bleeding gums and bad breath are also considered signs that your Stomach may be struggling. This is due to the Stomach's direct connection with the mouth.

When your Spleen becomes out of balance, you might find that you gain body fat more easily, and it is more difficult to lose weight. This is due to the Spleen's relationship with the pancreas and insulin production.

You might also feel tired and sluggish all the time. Having no energy, weak muscles and heavy, aching limbs are all classic symptoms of Spleen deficiency.

In Chinese medicine the Spleen also has a “holding” function. When healthy it should keep all the muscles and organs in their place. When the Spleen becomes weak, it can lose this ability and this results in problems such as hernias and prolapses as well as loose, hanging or flabby skin.

Weak Spleen function can also result in digestive issues like loose, watery stools. If you suffer from diarrhea on a regular basis, it could be a sign of Spleen deficiency.

For women, the Spleen also plays an important role in menstruation and Spleen imbalance must be considered as a possible cause for any women's problems such as painful, heavy or irregular periods.

As well as its physical functions, the Spleen is considered to “house thought” and plays an important role in mental processes, memory and study. Having a weakened Spleen can result in an inability to think straight, poor concentration and forgetfulness.

People with Stomach and Spleen imbalances are also prone to worrying. Like the Stomach churns food around and around to digest it, these people can get stuck on a particular thought, turning it over and over looking for a solution.

These people often turn to food in an effort to calm themselves, resulting is what is commonly known as comfort eating.

- **Damp and Phlegm – Fatty Foods that Stick Like Glue**

The Spleen is prone to the pathogenic factors of damp and phlegm. This refers to any heavy or sticky substances which sit in the body, blocking up the channels and preventing smooth circulation of *qi*, blood and body fluids.

Some people are naturally more predisposed to damp and phlegm, but there are other contributing factors which can be avoided.

The primary cause of damp and phlegm is a diet high in rich, creamy and fatty foods and refined sugars. These foods put an extra strain on the Spleen and prevent it from transforming and transporting as it should.

These unprocessed substances then collect around the body causing clogged arteries, obesity, swelling and edema.

Damp and phlegm play a major part in obesity in Chinese medicine. Not everyone who is suffering from damp and phlegm will be overweight, but almost everyone who is overweight will have some degree of damp and phlegm in their system.

- **Harmonizing the Stomach and Spleen – Bringing Balance to your Digestion**

The food that you eat plays an important part in keeping your Stomach and Spleen healthy. However, almost as important as *what* you eat, is *how* you eat.

Your Stomach prefers foods that are warm, soft and wet. When you think about what happens to food inside the Stomach, it should come as no surprise that these are easier to digest. Half of the Stomach's work has already been done for it!

So eat more soups, stews and porridge and avoid too much food that is cold, raw or hard. If you simply must have a salad, have a small bowl of soup or a hot drink at the same time to give your Stomach a helping hand.

Remember your parents or grandparents telling you to chew your food properly? Well now you know why... the better your stomach performs, the healthier you will be.

Eating slowly is very important too. By eating slowly, you will chew your food properly as well as giving your stomach some time to tell the brain that it's full.

Your Stomach performs at its peak in the morning, so eat a good breakfast. At this time of day your Stomach is much better at digesting than in the evening, when most people eat their main meal.

Try to switch this around so that you eat more at breakfast time and a smaller dinner, with a regular sized meal in between. Eating a proper breakfast will also improve your energy and concentration in the morning and keep you going until lunch without the temptation of snacks.

Due to the Spleen's function of housing thought, doing any kind of mental activity while eating can be very detrimental. So step away from your desk, turn off your mobile phone and focus on enjoying your food!

Finally, don't overeat. This may sound obvious but it's something which is all too easy to do. Stop eating just before you feel full, as it takes about 20 minutes for your body to register that it's had enough.

Although it may go against everything you've been brought up to believe - **it's okay to leave food on your plate once you're satisfied**. Your Stomach, and your waistline, will thank you later.

- **Enlivening the Channels – a Wakeup Call for the Stomach and Spleen**

In Chinese medicine, the state of your health depends a lot on the state of your *qi* (pronounced chee). This roughly translates as “vital energy” or “life force” and as well as the *qi* of your whole body, each organ has its own *qi* too.

Qi is an invisible, intangible substance that is responsible for movement of matter and communication within the body. It could be compared to the communications networks of the nervous and endocrine systems in western medicine.

Every organ has its own channel, or meridian. This is an invisible line on the body which carries *qi* like a river from one part of the body to another. When the body is healthy, *qi* can flow smoothly, nourishing the muscles and tissues as it goes.

However, if the *qi* becomes blocked or sluggish, or if there simply isn't enough of it to fill the channels and flow properly, this is when disease occurs.

- **Scientific Proof of the Meridian System**

There has been much research from different nations who have proven the meridian system. Many have tried different testing methods; using newer technology such as CT scans, but all comes to the same conclusion.

The most groundbreaking revelations were initially made by French Physicians Jean Claude Darras MD and Professor Pierre de Vernejoul.

They injected the isotope tracer **Te99** into the acupoints of volunteer patients and then monitored the tracers movements using a gamma imaging camera.

The tracers travelled along the exact meridian lines within minutes after injection.

To challenge their findings, they injected non-meridian points - finding that the tracers simply pooled up and remained in the same spot.

Interestingly, tracers flowing through diseased parts of the body slowed down dramatically or stopped - compared to a fast flow around healthy parts of the meridian system.

Some sceptics dismiss acupuncture and acupressure; citing the "placebo effect". This is where 30% of people will be shown to heal in experiments when given a sugar pill instead of the "real medicine".

However, the placebo effect has been debunked because animals who can't comprehend suggestion also respond well to the healing properties of acupuncture.

The acupressure points are one way in which we can unblock *qi* and restore healthy circulation. Another way is to stretch the meridian channels as a way of attracting more *qi* and freeing up its flow.

The Stomach and Spleen channels are primarily located on the front of the legs and body. By stretching these areas you can wake up your digestive organs and get them working more efficiently.

Try these two exercises in the morning as an easy way to kick start your metabolism every day.

Primary Stretch

Kneel on a yoga mat with your knees apart. Keep the tops of your feet flat on the floor and your heels on either side of your buttocks.

Placing your hands behind you for support, gently begin to lean back. You should feel a stretch in the tops of your feet and the front of your thighs.



If you are not very flexible, you can stop here. The aim is not to make yourself uncomfortable, so listen to your body and only go as far as feels right.

If this stretch is easy for you, you can put your elbows down to the ground and gradually work your way down until your back is on the floor. In this position you can also feel the stretch extending to the front of your body.

If this is still not enough of a stretch for you; lift your arms and lay them on the ground above your head.

Only go as far as needed to stretch the front of the body. Stop if you feel any pain and take special care not to injure the back.

Once you have your stretch, take three long, deep breaths in and out before slowly and gently lifting yourself back up.

Complementary Exercise

Lie prone on the floor. Stretch your legs back, with the tops of your feet on the floor. Bend your elbows and spread your palms on the floor beside your waist so that your forearms are relatively perpendicular to the floor.

Inhale and press your inner hands firmly into the floor and slightly back, as if you were trying to push yourself forward along the floor. Then straighten your arms and simultaneously lift your torso up and your legs a few inches off the floor on an inhalation.

Look straight ahead or tip the head back slightly, but take care not to compress the back of the neck and harden the throat. Hold the pose anywhere from 15 to 30 seconds, breathing easily. Release back to the floor. Push back into child's pose and relax.



This can be repeated as many times as you wish to draw *qi* into the channels and restore its proper flow.

Chapter 5 - Acupressure for Weight Loss

The primary acupressure points to help with weight loss are points to support the Stomach and Spleen, reduce cravings and curb the appetite. These should be stimulated on a daily basis, preferably in the morning when the Stomach and Spleen are at their peak.

If you happen to go to the gym in the mornings, then doing these exercises after your workout is highly recommended.

The length of time to apply pressure depends on your time restraints. 30 seconds per acupoint is a sufficient amount of time to experience results, but if your schedule allows it; 2-3 minutes per point is ideal.

Additionally, you can include points to calm and reduce anxiety if you are prone to overeating when stressed or nervous. These can be used as and when needed, as often as you like.

Finally, select acupressure points which will help you to wind down at the end of a long day and get a good night's sleep – a crucial ally in your quest to lose weight. These are best stimulated as you're lying in bed at night, ready to relax and drift off.

- **Acupressure Points to Support the Stomach and Spleen**

These points should be stimulated every day, preferably in the morning. Use your thumb or forefinger to apply medium to firm pressure for one minute on each point.

Stomach 19 – Bu Rong – Not Contained



Location: On the abdomen, eight finger widths above the centre of the belly button and three finger widths out from the midline, on the inner edge of the abdominal muscles.

Actions: Supports the Stomach and Spleen and aids digestion.

Protects against overeating.

Stomach 36 – Zu San Li – Leg Three Miles



Location: On the calf, in a hollow formed alongside the prominent bony ridge at the top of the tibia. This will be on the outer border of the bone on both legs.

Point Location Tip: You can locate this point by holding your thumb out at 90° from the fingers and resting across the top of your knee. In this position the tip of your middle finger should naturally fall onto the point.

Actions: Supports the Stomach and Spleen.

Benefits digestion.

Aids weight loss.

Stomach 40 – Feng Long – Abundant Splendor



Location: Midway between the knee crease and the outer prominence of the ankle bone, two finger widths outwards from the bony ridge of the tibia.

Actions: Clears damp and phlegm, relieving edema and swelling.

Relieves headaches and dizziness.

Spleen 3 – Tai Bai - Supreme White



Location:

On the inner edge of the foot, at the change in skin color. In a hollow at the flare of the head of the metatarsal bone.

Actions:

Benefits the Spleen and Stomach and aids digestion.

Clears dampness, eliminates excess fluids and aids weight loss.

Spleen 9 – Yin Ling Quan – Yin Mound Spring



Location: On the inner aspect of the lower leg, just below the knee. If you run your finger up the leg from ankle to knee, you will find a bony prominence which is the head of the tibia.

This point feels tender to pressure when there is excess damp and phlegm stuck in the system.

Actions: Removes phlegm, relieves swelling and edema.

Aids weight loss.

Spleen 16 – Fu Ai – Abdominal Sorrow



Location:

On the abdomen, four finger widths above the centre of the navel on the outer border of the abdominal muscles. To locate the abdominal muscles lie on your back and slightly raise your head and shoulders.

Actions:

Regulates the intestines and aids digestion.

Relieves abdominal pain and bloating.

Conception Vessel 12 – Zhong Wan – Middle Duct



Location:

On the midline of the body. Approximately midway between the centre of the navel and the body ridge towards the bottom of the sternum, or ten finger widths above the centre of the navel.

Actions: Supports the Stomach and Spleen and aids digestion.

Relieves digestive disorders such as indigestion and heartburn.

Reduces appetite (massage in a clockwise direction for a few minutes before eating).

Large Intestine 4 – Joining Valleys



Location: On the back of the hand between the first and second metacarpal bones in a hollow at the base of the second metacarpal bone. This point may feel tender to pressure.

CAUTION: Do not use during pregnancy.

Actions:

Regulates the Large Intestine and relieves constipation.

Aids elimination of waste products from the body.

- **Acupressure Points to Reduce Cravings and Curb Appetite**

These points can be stimulated whenever you have cravings for unhealthy foods, the urge to snack between meals, or feel like overeating. Apply medium to firm pressure until the craving subsides.

Appetite Control Point

This point is part of a system known as auricular (ear) acupuncture. This is a relatively new system which uses points on the ear to treat various ailments throughout the rest of the body.

Ear acupressure is a modern system of treatment which is not connected to the meridians. It works on the basis that every part of the body has a reflex point in the ear. By stimulating these points you can treat symptomatically without the need for a complex diagnosis. It is not as holistic as body acupressure but makes an effective, quick and easy supplementary therapy.

The points are not related to any meridians and do not have Chinese names. They are used mainly for symptomatic relief in their corresponding body parts.



Location: On the ear, at the centre of the tragus (the fleshy part in front of the ear canal). This point can be stimulated by squeezing the whole tragus whenever you have an unwanted craving for food.

Actions: Controls the appetite and reduces cravings

Governing Vessel 26 – Ren Zhong - Man's Middle



Location:

On the midline of the face, two thirds of the way up from the upper lip to the nose.

Actions:

Controls food cravings.

Reduces swelling and edema of the face. Relieves stress and calms the mind.

- **Acupressure Points to Calm and Reduce Anxiety**

Use these points whenever you feel like eating due to stress and nervousness. Apply medium pressure to the points along with deep breathing until you begin to feel more relaxed and your urge to eat subsides.

Stomach 8 – Tou Wei - Corner of the Head



Location: Just inside the hairline, at the corner of the forehead.

Actions: Relieves stress and calms the mind. The alternative name for this point is “Head Tied” and it is particularly good for relieving stuck or circular thinking and worry.

Extra Point – Yin Tang – Seal Hall



Location:

On the face, between the inner ends of the eyebrows.

Actions:

Relieves stress and calms the mind.

- **Acupressure Points to Aid Restful Sleep**

Stimulate these points just before bed to ensure a restful night's sleep. Use your thumb or forefinger and apply medium to firm pressure to each point for one minute. Kidney 6 and Bladder 62 can be stimulated together to increase their effectiveness.

Heart 7 – Shen Men – Spirit Door



Location: On the inner forearm, on the side of the little finger. The point is at the wrist crease, between the tendon and the small, prominence of the pisiform, the small, pea-like bone on the wrist.

Actions: Calms the mind and relieves stress. Relieves insomnia.

Kidney 6 – Zhao Hai – Illuminated Sea



Location:

On the inner foot, below the prominence of the ankle bone, in a groove between the two ligaments.

Actions:

Benefits *yin* and aids sleep.

Bladder 62 – Shen Mai – Extended Vessel



Location:

On the outside of the foot, just below the ankle bone.

Actions:

Relieves insomnia and benefits sleep.

Thyroid Problems

The relationship between thyroid and weight is that one of the symptoms of under active thyroid is weight gain. So if you have that diagnosis then getting your thyroid levels right can help you to lose weight.

Thyroid point - helpful if you have gained weight due to a thyroid imbalance.



Endocrine point - balances the hormones and is useful in thyroid conditions, diabetes and other hormonal imbalances.



- **Acupressure Routines for Metabolism and Weight Loss**
- **The Bare Minimum**

If you're short on time or you are combining these exercises with other acupressure points for other ailments (like high blood pressure or skin problems etc); you will require a more condensed routine like this one.

The length of time to apply pressure depends on your time restraints. 30 seconds per acupoint is a sufficient amount of time to experience results, but if your schedule allows it; 2-3 minutes per point is ideal.

Here are the most potent points which you can focus-on to give your Stomach and Spleen a refreshing kick start.

Stomach 36



Location: On the calf, in a hollow formed alongside the prominent bony ridge at the top of the tibia. This will be on the outer border of the bone on both legs.

Spleen 3



Location: On the inner edge of the foot, at the change in skin color. In a hollow at the flare of the head of the metatarsal bone.

Spleen 16



Location: On the abdomen, four finger widths above the centre of the navel on the outer border of the abdominal muscles. To locate the abdominal muscles lie on your back and slightly raise your head and shoulders.

Conception Vessel 12



Location: On the midline of the body. Approximately midway between the centre of the navel and the body ridge towards the bottom of the sternum, or ten finger widths above the centre of the navel.

Apply medium to firm pressure for one minute on each point. These are best stimulated in the morning, but if that isn't convenient, then just do them when you have a chance. Try to find a time when you can relax undisturbed for a few minutes so that you can really focus on the points and their sensations.

Don't forget that you can use the points to calm your cravings and relieve stress as and when you need to at any point during the day.

- **Full Commitment**

When you have more time on your hands and feel like giving your Stomach and Spleen an extra treat, or you are simply committed to reaching your goals; you can perform this longer routine including all of the points listed.

They are best stimulated in the following order, in the direction of the flow of *qi*.

The length of time to apply pressure depends on your time restraints. 30 seconds per acupoint is a sufficient amount of time to experience results, but if your schedule allows it; 2-3 minutes per point is ideal.

Stomach 19



Location: On the abdomen, eight finger widths above the centre of the belly button and three finger widths out from the midline, on the inner edge of the abdominal muscles.

Stomach 36



Location: On the calf, in a hollow formed alongside the prominent bony ridge at the top of the tibia. This will be on the outer border of the bone on both legs.

Stomach 40



Location: Midway between the knee crease and the outer prominence of the ankle bone, two finger widths outwards from the bony ridge of the tibia.

Spleen 3



Location: On the inner edge of the foot, at the change in skin color. In a hollow at the flare of the head of the metatarsal bone.

Spleen 9



Location: On the inner aspect of the lower leg, just below the knee. If you run your finger up the leg from ankle to knee, you will find a bony prominence which is the head of the tibia.

Spleen 16



Location: On the abdomen, four finger widths above the centre of the navel on the outer border of the abdominal muscles. To locate the abdominal muscles lie on your back and slightly raise your head and shoulders.

Conception Vessel 12



Location: On the midline of the body. Approximately midway between the centre of the navel and the body ridge towards the bottom of the sternum, or ten finger widths above the centre of the navel.

Large Intestine 4



Location: On the back of the hand between the first and second metacarpal bones in a hollow at the base of the second metacarpal bone. This point may feel tender to pressure.

CAUTION: Do not use during pregnancy.

Stimulate each point for one minute using medium to firm pressure. The routine is best carried out in the morning if possible.

Then add in the points to reduce cravings and anxiety throughout the day as needed.

If you feel that you need some help to get a good night's sleep, use the acupressure points to aid restful sleep once you're settled down in bed at night.

What's Next?

Now that you've reached the end of East Metabolism Miracle, what's next?

It's important to remember to keep up with your acupressure routine... but it is equally important to keep in mind the factors that caused your weight gain to begin with - such as your lifestyle choices, diet, and your mental wellbeing.

A poor diet may have served you fine when you were in your 20's, but if you're edging closer to middle age and live on fried chicken, burgers, fries and pizza then it might be the right time to consider choosing healthier options.

Stress is often the root of common ailments. If you can take control of your mental wellbeing; your body will usually take care of the rest.

The benefits of meditation are immense. Not only will meditation greatly reduce your stress, but it will aid your sleep (allowing you to recharge on less sleep), increase memory and cognition, boosts Qi, slows the aging process and increases your happiness. Meditation can be practiced while you apply acupressure. The Natural Synergy App is packed with tools to help you relax and clear the mind.

The Natural Synergy App is more than an acupressure aid. The soothing and healing bio-acoustic frequencies, sounds of nature, Solfeggio tones and binaural tracks can be mixed to your own personal liking, and used as a sleeping aid, for your yoga regime or your next meditation session.

Creating a habit out of your acupressure routines is the most important step towards good health.

Wishing you all the best in health and happiness,

Emily J. Parker and Dr Lin Xiaoxi