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# Shiatsu Winter Newsletter

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Welcome to the first edition of our Shiatsu Newsletter.

## *The Five Elements*

The Five Elements (Earth, Metal, Wood, Water and Fire) relate to different forms of Ki. There is a yin and yang meridian associated with each element, except Fire, which has two associated pairs of meridians. The elements each correspond to certain parts or functions of the body, as well as to certain emotions, and various phenomena which are thought to have a similar kind of energy.

## *Water Element*

The Water element houses the spark of life and is like a germinating seed in the winter. Water is the potential, or impetus, for any action a person takes or thinks about taking. The Kidneys store the essence of the body, which is used throughout a person's lifetime, until it leaves at the time of death. The body tissue of water is the bones, the deepest part of the body. Water relates to a person's "backbone", or foundation, and to the nervous system.

## *Element Season: Winter*

The Five Elements represent the ancient view of the changing seasons and the way human beings fit into them. If we don't live in harmony with the movements of nature, we become ill. According to Chinese thought, human beings should mirror the Ki of nature in their conduct, consciously avoiding activity.



***The three months of winter are called the period of closing and storing. People should retire early at night and rise late in the morning, and they should wait for the rising of the sun. They should repress and conceal their wishes, as though they had no internal purpose, as though they have been fulfilled.***

*(Yellow Emperor's Classic, P102).*



## **DID YOU KNOW?**

The time of the Water Element is in the afternoon (3pm – 7pm), when workers have used up morning energy which the spleen and stomach provide.

Now is the time when adequate kidney yang and the bladder's function of transforming Ki are essential, if energy levels are not to reach rock bottom for the last working hours of the day. The endurance and will epitomized by the water element must also come into play.

Many people with a water imbalance will report a sudden drop in energy levels in the latter part of the afternoon.

Shiatsu will be given to complement the energy levels you present at the time of treatment.

## Someone with harmonious Water energy:

- Have realistic goals and ambitions, and the energy to achieve them.
- Has good relationship with family, extended family and ancestors.
- Takes an occasional alcoholic drink, coffee or tea – but nothing in excess.
- Have a good constitution, good health, and a reliable memory.
- Needs some excitement and danger, but will limit this to appropriate risk taking.
- Have a strong back and a healthy posture.

## Symptoms of Water Element Imbalance:

When water is out of balance, a wide variety of symptoms may be present. There may be hormone disorders, kidney, urinary or reproduction disharmonies, bone issues (arthritis and osteoporosis), tooth problems, sore or painful lower back and hearing problems. Fatigue is commonly associated with a Water imbalance, as is susceptibility to stress, anxiety, tension and phobias.

## Self-care for Water:

- Take a bath, especially with Epsom salts.
- Write a journal.
- Meditate.
- Avoid caffeine and other stimulants.
- Spend time near bodies of water, such as the ocean or a lake.
- When working long hours, it is important to schedule in some rest.

**WARNING** - Always visit physician or other health professional when symptoms are serious or persistent.



*Under heaven, nothing is more soft and yielding than water. Yet for attacking the solid and strong, nothing is better. It has no equal.  
(Tao Te Ching)*

## How does Water energy get out of balance?

### Overwork

People whose work is physically demanding are especially likely to run down their Water energy. (Especially if the candle is being burnt at both ends!)

### Cold

Cold weather, cold environments and not wearing enough clothes particularly around the lower back, will weaken Water energy.

### Traumas

Frightening or shocking experiences such as physical accidents or emotional hurts can damage Water energy. People need time, with good rest, to recover from such experiences.

### The Water Element relates to:

- Kidneys and Urinary Bladder
- A person's constitution
- Bones, hair, posture and memory
- Courage and bravery
- Drive and impetus
- Past and future
- Balance and moderation