



KATIE BRINDLE

Vertigo Guide

Treatment techniques Rooted in Chinese Wisdom



Overview

Vertigo is a sensation of spinning or whirling, often accompanied by dizziness, imbalance, nausea, and possibly vomiting or visual disturbances. Western medicine views Vertigo as a problem primarily caused by issues within the inner ear or the brain's vestibular system. However, from a Chinese Medicine perspective, the condition is attributed to disharmonies in the energy balance of the body, primarily the Liver, Kidneys and Spleen; the flow of Qi and blood; and the invasion of external or internal pathogens such as Wind or Damp-Phlegm.

Causes

- Wind Pathogens: A major disruptive force in Chinese Medicine, external Wind invading the body, especially if underlying Qi or blood deficiency exists, can result in imbalances that manifest as Vertigo, particularly in cases where the condition comes on suddenly, such as after exposure to windy conditions or a rapid change in weather. This is known as Liver Wind.
- Liver Yang Rising: Emotional stress, long-term frustration, or Kidney Yin deficiency can lead to disharmony within the Liver. This condition, characterised by the upwards disturbance of Liver Yang, can result in symptoms of Vertigo, including headaches and a feeling of pressure in the head.

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- **Kidney Deficiency:** A deficiency of Kidney Yin can lead to a relative excess of Yang. This Yin deficiency may then fail to anchor Qi, causing it to "float" upwards, creating symptoms of Vertigo such as dizziness and tinnitus.
- **Damp-Phlegm:** Associated with weak Spleen Qi and exacerbated by poor dietary habits, resulting in a compromised digestive system, the accumulation of Dampness and Phlegm can combine to obstruct clear Yang which may then disturb the mind, trigger nausea and manifest as other symptoms of Vertigo such as fullness in the chest and head.
- **Blood Deficiency:** Our blood nourishes and moistens the body, so if there is a deficiency, often due to compromised Spleen or Heart Qi, it can lead to insufficient nourishment and moisture reaching the head. This type of Vertigo, often experienced by those who have recently lost blood or who have chronic illnesses, may be accompanied by additional symptoms such as blurred vision, light headedness and a pale complexion.

Organs Implicated

- **Liver and Gallbladder:** The Liver ensures the smooth flow of Qi, blood and emotions around the body. Emotional disturbances such as stress, anger or frustration can lead to Liver Qi stagnation which, over time, may manifest as Vertigo due to the erratic flow of Qi and blood. Additionally, if Liver blood is deficient, there may be a failure to adequately nourish the head, contributing to the dizziness or light headedness experienced by Vertigo sufferers. Disharmony in the Liver can also cause a rise in Liver Yang or Liver Wind, leading to the headaches that so often accompany Vertigo. Although less directly implicated, the Gallbladder also plays a part as it is associated with decision making and courage, so any deficiency or stagnation may lead to indecisiveness and timidity, negatively affecting the Liver and contributing to the development of Vertigo, especially when accompanied by stress or emotional turmoil.

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- Kidneys: The Kidneys, the foundation of all Yin and Yang energies within the body, are essential for overall health and vitality. Kidney deficiency, particularly Kidney Yin deficiency, can lead to imbalances where Liver Yang becomes excessive, overwhelming the delicate Yin and rising upwards to cause Vertigo. This type of Vertigo is often seen in older people or those with chronic health conditions.
- Spleen: The Spleen plays a crucial role in the transformation and transportation of nutrients into Qi and blood. Weakened Spleen Qi may lead to the production of Dampness and Phlegm, which can cloud the mind and obstruct clear Yang, resulting in Vertigo. Additionally, compromised Spleen Qi can lead to a deficiency in blood, which is essential for nourishing the brain. This is why Vertigo can often be accompanied by symptoms such as fatigue, poor appetite, poor concentration and a feeling of heaviness.
- Heart: The Heart is not only ruler of the blood but also houses the Shen; our spirit or mind. Heart blood disharmony can result in inadequate nourishment of the mind, leading to emotional disturbances such as excessive worry or shock, which can disturb the Shen, leading to Vertigo symptoms such as palpitations and insomnia. The Heart's close connection to the Liver through our blood also means that emotional disturbances affecting the Heart can influence the Liver, contributing to the severity of Vertigo.

Emotions

Chronic emotional stress can severely disrupt the flow of Qi in the body. Each organ has specific negative emotions attached to it which, if left unresolved, can manifest as physical problems:

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- Liver: Associated with frustration and anger, when these negative emotions of the Liver are intense or unmanaged, they may lead to Liver Qi stagnation, disrupting the flow of Qi and blood and potentially contributing to Vertigo. In Chinese Medicine, the health of the Liver is often reflected in our emotional state; therefore, chronic frustration or long-term anger can both cause and exacerbate Liver imbalances, worsening symptoms of the condition.
- Gallbladder: Indecisiveness or timidity, negative emotions of the Gallbladder, can result in imbalances that can impact the Liver, contributing to conditions such as Liver Qi stagnation or Liver Yang rising, which can then manifest as Vertigo.
- Kidneys: Fear is the overriding negative emotion of the Kidneys. Chronic or deeply entrenched fear or shock can damage delicate Kidney Qi and as the Kidneys are fundamental to the body's constitutional health, this disruption can lead to a deficiency in Kidney Yin, causing an imbalance of Yin and Yang in the body. This imbalance can then manifest as Vertigo symptoms such as tinnitus, back pain and a sense of weakness.
- Spleen: Excessive worry and overthinking, the negative emotions of the Spleen, can severely weaken Spleen Qi. As the Spleen is so instrumental in efficient digestion and transformation of food into Qi and blood, these excessive emotional states can lead to an inability to manage blood and fluids properly, contributing to the formation of Damp-Phlegm in the body, clouding the head, exacerbating stress and aggravating the symptoms of Vertigo.
- Heart: The Heart is considered the master of all other organs, as well as housing the Shen. The negative emotions of the Heart, such as anxiety and shock, especially if chronic, can disturb the Heart's Qi, leading to imbalances in blood circulation, affecting both mental and physical health. This disturbance can then manifest as symptoms such as palpitations, insomnia and Vertigo.

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Acupressure

Acupressure is a technique that can easily be performed as part of your self-care practices. Gentle pressure is applied to specific points on the body with fingers or an acupressure tool to help clear blockages in the meridians, the pathways of the body through which Qi flows.

GB-20 (Fēngchí)

Location: Below the occiput, at the base of the skull, in the depression between the sternocleidomastoid and the trapezius, the two large neck muscles.

Why: This point is known for dispelling Wind, a key factor if Vertigo is sudden. Stimulating GB-20 also helps to relieve tension in the neck, improves circulation to the brain, reduces headaches and alleviates stiffness in the neck area, all of which are beneficial in managing Vertigo.

LIV-3 (Tàichōng)

Location: Found on the top of the foot, in the fleshy webbing between the big toe and the second toe, approximately two thumb-widths from the edge of the webbing.

Why: LIV-3 is a crucial point for soothing Liver Qi stagnation and subduing Liver Yang, common underlying causes of Vertigo. Stimulating this point helps to regulate and smooth the flow of Liver Qi, reducing stress and lessening the effects of emotional disturbances. Harmonising Liver Qi helps in preventing and reducing symptoms of Vertigo, especially those related to stress or emotional issues.

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ST-36 (Zúsānlǐ)

Location: This point is found on the leg, four finger widths down from the bottom of the kneecap, one finger width outside of the shinbone.

Why: ST-36 is a powerful acupoint for strengthening the Spleen and Stomach; vital for transforming and transporting nutrients for the efficient production of Qi and blood. It is particularly effective in addressing Vertigo caused by Damp-Phlegm or blood deficiency. Stimulating this point enhances digestive health, boosts energy levels and promotes the overall nourishment of the body, which helps to alleviate the symptoms of Vertigo.

KID-3 (Tàixī)

Location: This point is located on the inner side of the foot. Find the highest point of the inner ankle, and then slide your finger down into the depression between the ankle bone and the Achilles tendon.

Why: KID-3 is an essential point for fortifying Kidney energy, especially nourishing Kidney Yin. It is useful in the treatment of Vertigo related to Kidney deficiency, as nourished Kidney Yin can, in turn, positively affect Liver Yang, which is so implicated in Vertigo symptoms such as dizziness, tinnitus and a feeling of imbalance. Furthermore, this powerful acupressure point can help balance the body's fundamental Yin and Yang, to support overall health and wellbeing.

Yang Sheng Practices

There are many practices, lifestyle choices, self-care tools and supplements that can be used to help manage the symptoms and the root cause of Vertigo, including:

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- **Qigong:** This gentle, flowing practice, that combines movement, breathing and meditation, is particularly effective in balancing Yin and Yang energies in the body, smoothing the flow of Qi, and strengthening the five key organs of the body. In the context of Vertigo, this can help to enhance inner ear balance mechanisms, improve focus and mindfulness and reducing stress, all of which can be contributing factors in the occurrence of Vertigo.
- **Meditation:** Regular meditation can profoundly impact emotional wellbeing, helping to manage stress and anxiety, which are often linked to Vertigo, especially when connected to emotional disturbances affecting the Liver and Heart. This mindful practice is invaluable in grounding and centring the mind, reducing the disorientating effects of the condition.
- **Breathwork:** Deep, controlled breathing will enhance oxygenation of the blood, calm the nervous system and help to reduce stress. Mindful breathwork can help to improve cerebral blood flow and stabilise Qi, which is crucial for maintaining balance and managing dizzy spells.
- **Gua Sha and Bamboo Tapping Therapy:** Gua Sha, gently press-stroking the skin with the rounded edge of a Gua Sha tool, can help to promote circulation and clear stagnation. Bamboo Tapping Therapy, used to tap along the meridians of the body will also stimulate blood circulation, release muscle tension and enhance Qi flow. Both of these practices are beneficial for Vertigo as they can powerfully relieve tension in the neck and head area, promoting overall energy flow.
- **Dietary Advice:** In Chinese Medicine, diet plays a crucial role in maintaining overall balance, health and vitality. With regards to Vertigo, a diet that supports Spleen Qi and prevents Dampness is highly recommended; this includes warm, cooked, easily digested foods that won't overburden the digestive system, and avoiding cold, raw and overly greasy or spicy foods. Foods that are naturally grounding and nourishing, such as root vegetables, whole grains and moderate amounts of protein, are most beneficial. Additionally, staying hydrated and avoiding excessive caffeine and alcohol can especially help in maintaining inner ear and overall bodily balance. This is important because internal dryness can disturb the delicate balance of Yin and Yang. Herbal teas that nourish Yin, such as chrysanthemum or goji berry, will be particularly helpful.

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- **Sleep:** Sleep is vital for the body's healing and rebalancing processes. Good quality sleep will nourish Yin and allow the proper flow of Qi and blood. Adequate sleep, particularly when Vertigo is related to deficiencies in Kidney Yin or blood, is crucial as it will support all the organs of the body but especially the Liver and Kidneys. Maintaining a regular sleep pattern, aiming for 7-8 hours a night and ideally sleeping by 11pm so that the Liver can repair and rejuvenate, is highly recommended. Sleeping in a dark, quiet and cool environment helps the body's natural rhythms, further supporting the Liver to reduce symptoms of Vertigo and prevent future outbreaks. Limiting screen time, especially before bed, and engaging in calming activities such as reading a gentle book or listening to soft music, can help reduce some symptoms of Vertigo, especially for those experiencing the condition due to stress or mental overload.

Useful Supplements

There are many helpful supplements that can be taken as both preventative self-care and to alleviate symptoms of Vertigo, these include:

- **American Ginseng:** American Ginseng is known for its cooling ability to nourish Yin and clear internal heat, rather than the more stimulating and warming Asian Ginseng, traditionally used to strengthen Yang. American Ginseng can be beneficial for those experiencing Vertigo due to Yin deficiency as it can help replenish vital energy, improve stamina and help stress reduction.
- **Ginger:** Revered in Chinese Medicine, Ginger is known for its remarkable ability to alleviate nausea, support digestive health and manage Dampness and Phlegm, two pathological factors often implicated in the occurrence of Vertigo. By improving digestion and reducing Damp-Phlegm, Ginger helps restore the balance and clarity of Qi, contributing to the relief of some Vertigo symptoms.

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- Dong Quai (Angelica Sinensis): Often referred to as "female ginseng," Dong Quai is renowned for its ability to invigorate and harmonise the blood, crucial for preventing and treating Vertigo related to blood deficiency. It also helps in regulating the immune system and improving overall vitality.
- Hawthorn Berry: Traditionally used for its cardiovascular benefits, this little berry can help to improve blood circulation, has antioxidant properties and can aid in digestion, essential in managing Vertigo.
- Medicinal Mushrooms: There are many mushrooms that can provide valuable assistance in the treatment and prevention of Vertigo. Reishi is prized for its ability to nourish the Heart and calm the Shen, making it ideal for stress-related Vertigo; Lion's Mane is celebrated for its neuroprotective properties and support of gut health; Shiitake is known to benefit immune health and help the efficient filtration and movement of blood; and Turkey Tail is recognised for its potent immune-enhancing and anti-inflammatory properties, supporting the body's resilience, which is crucial in managing chronic conditions such as Vertigo.

Conclusion

Chinese Medicine offers a comprehensive and holistic approach to managing Vertigo, focusing on balancing and harmonising the body. By working to dispel Wind, soothe Liver Qi and balance Kidneys especially, both the symptoms and underlying cause of the condition can be significantly helped. The addition of Yang Sheng practices, including qigong, meditation, use of mindful supplements and ensuring adequate sleep and appropriate diet will further illustrate the importance of nurturing life and maintaining health and wellbeing through a balanced lifestyle.

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Want to know more?

We will be delighted to support you as you continue along your Yang Sheng journey.

The following will get you started:

'Yang Sheng: The Art of Chinese Self-Healing' available on Amazon, Waterstone and www.hayoumethod.com

Buy Yang Sheng Book

Healing Movement classes (3 x each week) and live meditations for a more in-depth and healing practice – full details [here](#)

Free Masterclass "[Master Your Health](#)" – understand the 3- step plan for preventative health. Find more Healing Masterclasses [here](#).

Free self-care weekly content [@katiebrindle](#) on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube.

Free regular gua sha demonstrations on [@thehayoumethod](#) Instagram & the opportunity to purchase the accompanying tools from www.hayoumethod.com

DISCLAIMER:

Please note that any of these Yang Sheng techniques are designed to support your overall self-care and wellbeing and should not be used as a substitute for any Western medical advice or treatment that you may be receiving. You should not use the information in this Guide or on our website for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease and must always consult your doctor if you have any health concerns. Additionally, please note that there are a few contraindications to Yang Sheng techniques, so please visit www.hayoumethod.com to view our comprehensive FAQs.

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