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## **Feature Article By Julie Senko**

From a Chinese medicine perspective, the body's energy travels through pathways, often likened to waterways, called meridians. Lack of free flow or stagnation of these channels leads to pain. Free flow means health. For more Western minded folk, think of blockage of nerve transmission – i.e. – sciatica, carpal tunnel; blockage of blood flow – headaches, coronary artery disease, increase in healing time to soft tissues; blockage of hormone uptake – diabetes, menstrual issues, adrenal related disorders. Now imagine free flow.

The body has 6 meridians starting on the hand and going to the head, and a similar 6 on the foot also leading to the head. These meridians go through the torso and corresponding organs. They are paired yin and yang to address both the holding function and processing functions.

For example; bladder and kidney meridians are a pair. The bladder functions to eliminate urine, the kidney stores and creates urine. The other pairs are heart and small intestine, pericardium and triple heater, spleen and stomach, liver and gallbladder, lung and large intestine.

So let us imagine we are treating a headache. The headaches start in the back of the person's neck and travels up to the top of the forehead. First we will have to find out what triggers the headache. Is tension, stress or hormones a factor? So let's say the headaches are a result of stress. The liver organ is associated with stress. Since the liver is paired with the gallbladder we might want to ask if our person has a sour stomach or nausea while they have a headache. Then we will treat them with points that bring down the excess energy going to the head. To do that we treat points in the foot and perhaps some gallbladder points in the shoulder or neck if we find tension storing there.



We will also check the pulse and tongue to see what underlying conditions this individual might have. The tongue has areas, which correspond to organs, and the acupuncturist looks for cracks or discolouration on the tongue. The pulse has six positions also corresponding to organs and the acupuncturist looks for strength or weaknesses in these pulses.

In the end the person should go home headache free and with their underlying conditions in a better state than when they arrived.

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