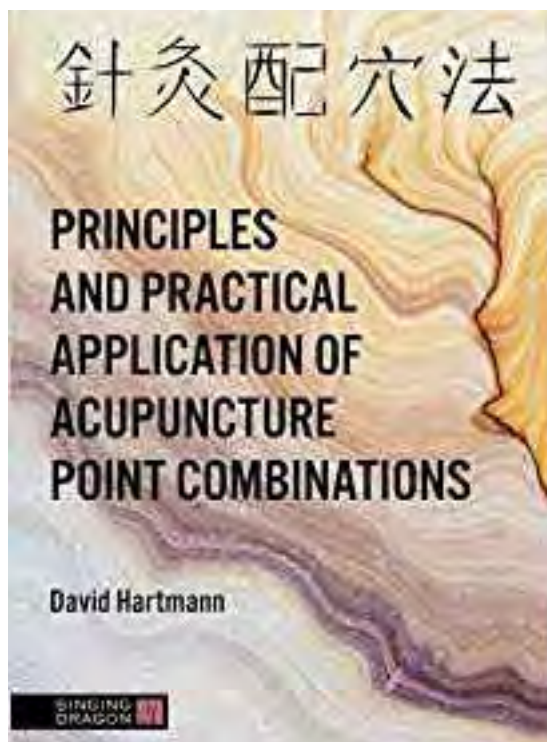




David Hartmann  
**The Principles and Practical Application of  
Acupunctur point combinations**



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# 1

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## How I Treat Patients

I have a number of different treatment strategies that need some discussion. This will give you a better understanding of how/why my treatments are structured the way they are.

### 1. Potential new patient

Typically, I get new patients via phone calls, walk-ins or from friends' gatherings. The first thing I need to do is to convince the person that acupuncture can help them with their complaint. Sometimes this isn't hard because the person has had acupuncture before or because they have been referred to me by an existing patient.

Sometimes, however, it's difficult to convince them about the benefits of acupuncture. They could be worried about the needles hurting. They might be concerned about the cost of the treatment. They might even be convinced (by whom, I have no idea) that Chinese medicine only requires one treatment and their complaint will be healed.

As the 6th essay in *The Spiritual Pivot* (Líng Shū/靈樞)<sup>3</sup> guides us, 'For a disease of nine days, three acupuncture treatments. For a disease of a month, ten acupuncture treatments. More or less, near or far, treat in accord with the dimensions of the disease' (Wu 1993, p.32).

I'm not sure what your experience has been in other countries, but I have found that in Australia these are the typical concerns that potential new patients have when deciding whether to try acupuncture. But I don't shy away from these questions.

For starters, we know that acupuncture doesn't hurt very much, and I often say that an acupuncture needle is thinner than a strand of hair. I also mention that about one in every ten needles might bite a little – like a mosquito bite – but that the sensation goes away almost immediately.

As for cost, the Chinese medicine community in Australia charges very little compared with other medicines. If they need further explanation, then I might discuss the call-out costs of plumbers and electricians. Or I might mention the costs of seeing a naturopath initially and then the ongoing appointment/supplement

17. Favorite points

Do I have favorite points? Of course! I’m sure most of you have, too. A lot of these points are included in this book. Table 1.1 outlines my 100 favorite points. There are plenty of other points not in the list that I use on a regular basis, but I had to be ruthless when narrowing my list down to only 100.

My favorite points are the ones I use most often in clinic and so they are, to some degree, based on the patient’s presenting complaints. Currently, the two most common categories of complaints that my patients present with are Shén disorders and musculoskeletal complaints.

Table 1.1 Favorite 100 acupuncture points

Channels	Points	
Lung channel	LU 5 LU 7	LU 9
Heart channel	HT 6	HT 7
Pericardium channel	PC 6	
Large Intestine channel	LI 4 LI 10	LI 11 LI 20
Small Intestine channel	SI 3 SI 7	SI 14
Sān Jiāo channel	TE 4 TE 5	TE 6 TE 17
Spleen channel	SP 3 SP 4 SP 6	SP 9 SP 10 SP 21
Liver channel	LR 2 LR 3	LR 13 LR 14
Kidney channel	KI 1 KI 3 KI 6 KI 7 KI 22	KI 23 KI 24 KI 25 KI 26 KI 27
Stomach channel	ST 8 ST 21 ST 25 ST 34	ST 36 ST 40 ST 44
Gall Bladder channel	GB 20 GB 21 GB 24 GB 25 GB 29	GB 30 GB 34 GB 37 GB 40 GB 41

# 2

## Understanding Acupuncture Point Combinations

Before we jump head first into this book, we need to spend a little time making sure that you understand what acupuncture point combinations actually are. This will require some discussion on a variety of topics including why combining points matters and how acupuncture point combinations work.

I also want to ensure that you are familiar with the terminology that will be used throughout the book. Lastly, I wanted to discuss the phrases ‘treat the person, not the disease’ and ‘prevention is better than cure’.

If we become familiar with constructing our own acupuncture point combinations, we can become more like the wizard practitioners of antiquity.

### 1. Why it matters

There are a number of reasons why accurate combining of acupuncture points matters in a treatment. You no doubt see the treatment combinations in most Chinese medicine books you read. These could be standardized treatment protocols for a variety of diagnostic methods including the Zàng Fǔ patterns, Wǔ Xíng and the Shāng Hán Lùn, to name just a few.

Although these treatment protocols are unique for each diagnostic method, they are still acupuncture point combinations, and they are good ones which have likely been documented over hundreds, even thousands, of years of use. This book isn’t designed to make you move away from these learned diagnostic methods; rather, it aims to teach you ways you can edit these treatment protocols where necessary. Because, let’s face it, not all of our patients can be diagnosed using only one label.

Let me use a quick example here, with a much more in-depth example in Section 11 below.

I sometimes diagnose my patients with the Zàng Fǔ patterns of Liver Yáng Rising with Kidney Yīn Xū. In this instance, you essentially have three different patterns occurring at once. There is a chronic Liver Xuè Xū or Liver Yīn Xū, along with an

These Vital Substances are what we access when we treat patients with acupuncture; they move at different speeds, are in different locations and move at differing depths. Therefore, this requires us to think about which of these substances we want to activate when we construct treatments.

For example, a portion of the Jīn Yè is heavy, and gravity drops it to the lower parts of the body, including the feet, ankles, legs, hips/thighs and abdomen. This means we need to choose a point combination that will work against gravity and force the Jīn Yè to move back up the body. Sensibly, this means that you would choose points that are predominantly on the legs and located on channels that moved Qì up the body. Further, you can also select points on the abdomen to drag the Jīn Yè back up into the trunk for redistribution through the organs involved in Jīn Yè transformation and transportation. But you can also choose points that move Qì down the legs, which can create momentum by forcing the Jīn Yè to move; even though this pushes the Jīn Yè in the opposite direction to the way you want it to go, the momentum you generate provides additional thrust and lift back up the legs.

I explain it to my students (and sometimes my patients) as being like the famous Apollo 13 space voyage in 1970. The spacecraft was critically damaged and needed to return to Earth immediately. Instead of turning the spaceship around (which would have used up too much fuel as well as slowed them down), the commander of the ship flew a further distance to slingshot around the moon in order to generate extra speed and use less fuel by using Earth's gravity for the return journey.

This is exactly what happens when you choose acupuncture points that move Qì down the body; they slingshot the Qì, Xuè, Jīn Yè and Jīng back up the body. The key difference between Apollo 13 and acupuncture is that (in this example) we work *against* gravity.

Acupuncture point combinations can be used to flush the extremities or to nourish the organs. They can be used to sedate excesses or tonify deficiencies. We can bash through stagnations of any type and can expel External Pathogenic Factors. All of this is done through the dynamic flow of Vital Substances.

### 3. Stagnations, stasis, accumulations

Acupuncture point combinations can be used to bash through stagnations, stasis or accumulations. I teach my students that these terms are often specific to particular Vital Substances. For Qì, I use stagnation, as in Qì Stagnation; for Xuè, I use stasis, as in Xuè Stasis; for Jīn Yè, I use accumulation, as in Phlegm (Damp Heat) Accumulation or Damp Accumulation.

Qì Stagnation is usually the easiest to shift because Qì is the most ethereal Vital Substance. Xuè Stasis is usually the next easiest to shift, leaving Damp or Phlegm (Jīn Yè) the hardest to shift. Phlegm is often the most difficult to move because it has become a sticky, glugging, toxic, inflamed mess. This stickiness adheres to its surroundings and makes it very difficult to shift.<sup>7</sup>

## Metal element – Lungs and Large Intestine

### Example 1: LU 5 and LI 11

This point combination takes advantage of the following aspects:

- Points that treat the same signs/symptoms.

Among others, these points are great for treating tennis elbow/lateral epicondylitis.<sup>31</sup>

- Points on the channels that get close to one another.
- Points with similar Pīn Yīn names/meanings.

#### LU 5 (Chǐ Zé)

Chǐ = a Chinese measurement which equals about one foot; Zé = marsh.<sup>32</sup>

LU 5 is located about one foot from the wrist crease pulse. It is also a Water point and Hé (Uniting) Sea point on the Lung channel, thereby explaining the reference to a marsh.

#### LI 11 (Qū Chǐ)

Qū = bent or crooked; Chǐ = pool or pond.<sup>33</sup>

LI 11 is located at the bend of the elbow. It is also the Hé (Uniting) Sea point on the Large Intestine channel, thereby explaining the reference to a pool or pond of water.

### Example 2: LU 9 and LI 4

This point combination takes advantage of the following aspects:

- Both Yuán Source points.
- Points that treat the same Zàng Fǔ patterns.

Among others, these points are great for clearing External Pathogenic Factors, specifically Wind, as well as to strengthen Wèi Qì.<sup>34</sup>

- Points on the channels that are in close proximity.

### Example 3: LU 10 and LI 18

This point combination takes advantage of the following aspects:

- Points that treat the same signs/symptoms.

Among others, these points are great for treating throat problems and/or loss of voice.<sup>35</sup>

- A local point on one channel (LI 18) with a distal point on its paired channel (LU 10) for treating throat disorders.

# 4

## Using Similar Pīn Yīn Names/ Meanings When Combining Acupuncture Points

In Australian colleges and universities, acupuncture point names are given to students through a combination of channel and number – for example, Large Intestine 4 or its abbreviation, LI 4. Some colleges and universities will include the Pīn Yīn, along with the English translation, as well as the Chinese characters for the points (traditional and/or simplified).

When I was studying, I was required to learn the channel/number system as well as the Pīn Yīn. The only problem was we weren't told what the Pīn Yīn names meant. It became a rote learning exercise, and soon after I graduated I forgot the Pīn Yīn names.

It wasn't until I started teaching Chinese medicine that I slowly began to relearn the Pīn Yīn names. This time, however, I learned their English translation as well. This provided me with a much greater understanding of the acupuncture points and their meanings, which the channel/number system doesn't provide.

As I learned the Pīn Yīn names and their English translation, I provided these to my students so that they could have a better understanding of the points and their meanings. I even rewrote the point location subject to include the nomenclature for the Pīn Yīn point names.<sup>2</sup> I included examples of Pīn Yīn names that referred to water, mountains, valleys, animals, plants, architecture, astronomy, anatomy and therapeutic properties. Some of these included:

- HT 3 (Shào Hǎi) – Shào = Lesser; Hǎi = Sea. Meaning of Lesser Sea.<sup>3</sup>

HT 3 is a Hé (Uniting) Sea point and is part of the Shào (Lesser) Yīn Six Division partnership with the Kidney. Hence the name, Lesser Sea.

- LU 10 (Yú Jì) – Yú = Fish; Jì = Border. Meaning of Fish Border.<sup>4</sup>

ST 36 acts as a distal mirror for the Large Intestine channel in the form of the Yáng Míng Six Division pairings. It is located in the knee region, which therefore makes it suitable to treat the elbow region.

### **CASE STUDY 5.1 A 35-YEAR-OLD MALE (AS) WITH PAIN/TENDERNESS IN HIS RIGHT ELBOW**

AS was suffering from significant pain and tenderness at his right elbow near the lateral epicondyle of the humerus. He first noticed it five days prior after spending a weekend in the garden and it had not reduced in intensity at any stage in that five days.

AS commented that the pain was worse during and after use of the right arm, in particular when he was holding objects away from his body. He also found that typing on the computer keyboard was problematic. AS had full range of movement passively, but when I applied resistance, he complained of significant pain on wrist extension and pronation.

Upon Tūi Ná palpation, AS jumped and squealed when I pushed my thumbs into the region of LI 10, LI 11 and the common extensor tendon origin just distal to the lateral epicondyle. He also complained of discomfort when I ran my thumbs along the extensor digitorum communis muscle midway along the forearm. On further Tūi Ná, AS showed no discomfort at all on his left elbow/forearm and his neck was also fine.

My diagnosis for AS was Qì and Xuè stagnation of the Large Intestine and Sān Jiāo channels of the elbow and forearm of his right arm. The points I chose are listed in Table 5.1.

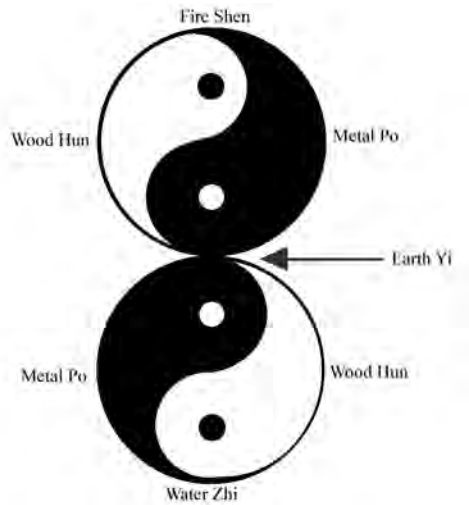
**Table 5.1 Treatment for tennis elbow<sup>66</sup>**

Points	Local/distal	Bilateral/unilateral
LI 4	Distal	Bilateral
LI 10	Local	Bilateral
LI 11	Local	Bilateral
LI 12	Local	Unilateral - right side only
LU 5	Local	Unilateral - right side only
TE 5	Distal	Bilateral
TE 10	Local	Unilateral - right side only
GB 34	Distal	Unilateral - left side only (swap sides for a mirror-image treatment)
ST 36	Distal	Unilateral - left side only (swap sides for a mirror-image treatment)
LR 3	Distal	Bilateral
Total points needed		15 needles used

The Wǔ Xíng/Wǔ Shén Earth Central diagram (7.1) represents:<sup>4</sup>

- Fire and Shén at the top
- Water and Zhì at the bottom
- Earth and Yì in the middle
- Metal and Pò on the right
- Wood and Hún on the left.

Diagram 7.2 looks at how the Wǔ Xíng/Wǔ Shén fit into the Figure Eight symbol.



*Diagram 7.2 Wǔ Xíng/Wǔ Shén and the Figure Eight*

The Wǔ Xíng/Wǔ Shén and the Figure Eight diagram (7.2) is imagining the Supreme Ultimate Yīn Yáng symbol in a slightly different way. Rather than having the symbol as a singular, I have placed one on top of the other so that it represents an eight. In this way the Figure Eight image is represented as follows:

- Fire is at the top. The Heart is a Fire element organ and houses our Shén.
- Water is at the bottom. The Kidneys are a Water element organ and house our Zhì.
- Earth is in the middle. The Spleen is an Earth element organ and houses our Yì.
- Metal is Yīn (Black) and is represented here as top right and bottom left. The Lungs are a Metal element organ and house our Pò.
- Wood is Yáng (White) and is represented here as top left and bottom right. The Liver is a Wood element organ and houses our Hún.

Welcome to Part 4 of *The Principles and Practical Application of Acupuncture Point Combinations*. Over the next four chapters I will be exploring some of the more esoteric ideas/topics in Chinese medicine. These topics are full of fascinating discussion, which I hope you enjoy reading as much as I enjoyed writing it.

It is worth noting that these four topics of the Qī Qíng/Seven Emotions, Qí Jīng Bā Mài/Eight Extraordinary Vessels, Wǔ Shén/Five Spirits and Wǔ Xíng/Five Element Archetypes do tend to get people talking. I know some of you will probably have strong views about them, which may oppose others' views. Regardless, these topics rarely disappoint!

Finally, like the Goddess Fortune implies (in the quotation above), life runs in cycles, and that is perfect symmetry for the four topics in Part 4. If you go into these chapters with that in mind, I think you will find that the chapters will read better and make more sense.

Why? Because they are polarizing and therefore tend to create strong discussion. I can't claim to know everyone's thoughts on why they have such strong views; although from personal experience, one of the biggest differentiating factors seems to be the medicine's history. Some people just don't consider these topics to be relevant because they haven't enough written history and clinical experience behind them.

I can comfortably say that this doesn't stand up on in-depth analysis for the Qī Qíng/Seven Emotions and the Wǔ Shén/Five Spirits, but it does, somewhat, for the Qí Jīng Bā Mài/Eight Extraordinary Vessels and Wǔ Xíng/Five Element Archetypes.

But when I find myself in these polarizing conversations, I often suggest to the other person that not every disease that was in ancient China can be applied to modern diseases. Therefore, we need newer interpretations on the wide range of different Chinese medicine concepts. So, whilst the Wǔ Xíng/Five Element Archetypes might be a more recent development in Chinese medicine and philosophy, it doesn't mean that we should automatically discount it for that reason alone.

It's not like we have treated all of the ancient Chinese diseases, therefore we need to consider how ancient Chinese medicine can be incorporated into our modern diseases. This may require us to look at the concepts and bring them into our modern world.

So, what can you expect from these four chapters?

Chapter 11 is on the Qī Qíng/Seven Emotions, and even though the title suggests seven emotions will be discussed, there are in fact twelve. I did this because I felt that the Seven Emotions creates restriction in clinical practice because not everyone fits into those headings.

Chapter 12 analyzes the Qí Jīng Bā Mài/Eight Extraordinary Vessels. It is worth noting that it's impossible to thoroughly discuss the Qí Jīng Bā Mài in one chapter so I have been target-specific with my acupuncture point combinations. I have also stripped away all the padding and given a very concise and easy-to-follow discussion on the Eight Extraordinary Vessels.

## Appendix 2

# Acupuncture Point Terms – English, Pīn Yīn and Traditional Chinese Characters

Term used in text	English term/name	Pīn Yīn 拼音	Traditional Chinese characters
BL 1	Urinary Bladder 1	Jīng Míng	睛明
BL 2	Urinary Bladder 2	Cuàn Zhú	攢竹
BL 7	Urinary Bladder 7	Tōng Tiān	通天
BL 8	Urinary Bladder 8	Luò Què	絡卻
BL 9	Urinary Bladder 9	Yù Zhěn	玉枕
BL 10	Urinary Bladder 10	Tiān Zhù	天柱
BL 11	Urinary Bladder 11	Dà Zhù	大杼
BL 12	Urinary Bladder 12	Fēng Mén	風門
BL 13	Urinary Bladder 13	Fèi Shū	肺俞
BL 14	Urinary Bladder 14	Jué Yīn Shū	厥陰俞
BL 15	Urinary Bladder 15	Xīn Shū	心俞
BL 16	Urinary Bladder 16	Dū Shū	督俞
BL 17	Urinary Bladder 17	Gé Shū	隔俞
BL 18	Urinary Bladder 18	Gān Shū	肝俞
BL 19	Urinary Bladder 19	Dǎn Shū	膽俞
BL 20	Urinary Bladder 20	Pí Shū	脾俞
BL 21	Urinary Bladder 21	Wèi Shū	胃俞
BL 22	Urinary Bladder 22	Sān Jiāo Shū	三焦俞
BL 23	Urinary Bladder 23	Shèn Shū	腎俞
BL 24	Urinary Bladder 24	Qì Hǎi Shū	氣海俞
BL 25	Urinary Bladder 25	Dà Cháng Shū	大腸俞
BL 26	Urinary Bladder 26	Guān Yuán Shū	關元俞
BL 27	Urinary Bladder 27	Xiǎo Cháng Shū	小腸俞
BL 28	Urinary Bladder 28	Páng Guāng Shū	膀胱俞

cont.



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