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## The Heart Of The Matter

As we move into the heart of the summer, when according to Traditional Chinese Medicine the energy of the body has moved into the Fire Element, I'd like to discuss the second part of the Element, the hardworking heart. To give you a better perspective about the amount of physical work your heart does, the average person's heart beats more than 100,000 times a day based on 72 beats per minute. If you stop to consider that, you will want to make it a priority to appreciate the different relationships that help support and regulate the heart, maintaining its function at the highest level possible.

Along with the small intestine, which was covered in last month's issue, the heart is one of the primary organs that corresponds to Fire and represents its yin (yielding) part. Known for housing the spirit, the heart is the main storage site for all your wisdom. Although memories are stored in the brain, it only when you have learned things "by heart" that you can be said to truly know them. The yin activities associated with the heart include the storage of all such knowing, or true wisdom, which can be a synthesis of your knowledge of life.

Related to the heart is the circulatory system, which is composed of the arteries that carry blood away from the heart to the capillaries and our cells, and the veins, which bring blood back to the heart. Also related to the heart is its protective outer covering, the pericardium. The chief muscles associated with the heart and its related components are the subscapularis (on the front side of your shoulder blade) the adductors of the thigh, the piriformis muscle within the buttock, and the gluteals of the buttock. Pain in any one of these muscles can be an indication of heart dysfunction.

Heart symptoms are usually related more to the heart's backup systems than to the heart itself. For instance, heart murmurs are due to a B vitamin deficiency. The whole B complex, which gets absorbed in the small intestine, accounts for normal contraction of the heart.

Similarly, although increased blood pressure is most often seen as a heart problem, it is usually due to an imbalance of the adrenal glands, another component of the Fire Element, which is one of the primary backups to the heart. Without adequate support from the adrenals, the heart will not have the energy to continue beating 100,000 times a day, and the result can be a heart attack.

The adrenal glands help to regulate all the different stresses our body's experience. The many hormones they secrete include cortisol, which regulates sugar-handling stress; adrenaline, which regulates the fight/flight response; and aldosterone, the primary hormone that regulates our sodium/potassium balance. The American Heart Association has warned us to be



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way of too much sodium when it comes to blood pressure problems, but this information is not fully accurate.

High blood pressure has more to do with adrenal burnout, or the lack of the regulatory hormone, aldosterone, which controls the sodium/potassium balance. If you have high blood pressure, rather than going on medication, a natural solution to consider is Cataplex G from Standard Process. This product provides vitamin G, a portion of the B Complex that helps to regulate the relaxation or vasodilation of the blood vessels. If the body lacks this substance, the vessels will not relax fully, and their narrowness will cause blood pressure to increase.

Interestingly, the whole B Complex is necessary for normal function of the small intestine, the other major organ associated with the Fire Element. Different portions of the B vitamins (along with folic acid, which is needed to activate vitamin B1) are required to activate acidophilus, a component of the bacteria that break down your food.

As far as the heart is concerned, if you take too many antibiotics, and fail to compensate by taking probiotics, the subsequent loss of intestinal flora can decrease your ability to absorb B vitamins, which may ultimately cause your heart to begin misfiring. By supporting normal heart contraction, the B vitamins keep the heart from torquing, or twisting upon itself. Torquing prevents the heart valves from closing properly and results in a heart murmur, which can be mistaken for a mitral valve prolapse.

A condition known as a hiatal hernia, in which the stomach herniates up through the hiatus in the diaphragm, putting pressure on the heart can cause symptoms that mimic a heart attack. The reflux associated with the hernia creates "heartburn," and since the nerves that control the diaphragm and portions of the

*continued on page 2*

## The Heart of the Matter *(continued from page 1)*

heart come out of the C5/C6 areas of the spine, which also supplies the shoulder and upper arm, the pain of a hiatal hernia can make you believe you're having a heart attack.

Along with the adrenals, the other primary back-up to the heart is the thyroid, another minor gland associated with the Fire Element. The thyroid helps to control heart rhythm and rate of contraction. When heart rhythm is off, one's first thought should be: thyroid. Two conditions related to heart rhythm problems are tachycardia (more than 100 beats per minute when resting) and bradycardia (less than 60 beats per minute when resting). Tachycardia is a serious condition and should be treated as soon as possible. Bradycardia is normal for anyone who is in great physical condition aerobically and already has a healthy heart.

Arrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythms) are related to deficiencies in iodine. Prolamine Iodine from Standard Process can be taken to restore proper levels of this vital nutrient. This will usually require several months, with a maintenance dose afterwards. Proper monitoring by your doctors is important before undertaking any iodine regime.

Herbal support related to assisting the heart and circulatory system includes

Hawthorn by Mediherb, for normal blood pressure, the promotion of cardiovascular health and antioxidant protection. Horsechestnut Complex, also from Mediherb, promotes venous integrity, easing the effects of heavy exercise, and supports healthy peripheral circulation. Celery seed, which helps to maintain blood pressure within a normal range, is also offered through Mediherb and can be purchased through the office.

### What to Consider

If you suspect you are having concerns with your heart, you'll want to get it checked out sooner rather than later. The heart is an important organ you don't want to take for granted.

Consider improving your digestion by supporting your small intestine to increase its ability to absorb B vitamins, thereby increasing the effectiveness of your acidophilus.

Doing so will decrease the chance of indigestion and a hiatal hernia. The adrenals will be allowed a break and a chance to recover their normal function, which will in turn allow for normal support to your heart, thus allowing your blood pressure to return to normal. You will also want to evaluate the functioning of your thyroid gland and whether

you are deficient in iodine. All of this will go a long way toward improving the health of your heart.

Vitaly important, you should also begin an exercise program that works your heart in an aerobic fashion. Doing so will increase the health and efficiency of your heart and allow it to become stronger with age, rather than suddenly quit without warning.

### My Offer to You

If you suspect you are having heart concerns, and want to know for sure, you'll need to come in and have the Full Heart Check at your next office visit in the month of July. During this check, I will evaluate your heart, adrenals, thyroid and circulatory system, along with their relationships to the rest of your body, to make sure all are functioning appropriately. I will also check the need for supplementation or herbal support, and make the recommendations necessary to get your heart back into top condition. To take advantage of this \$75.00 value, just call Jean at (845) 561-2225 and tell her you want the Full Heart Check. This will let her know that we will need to allot some extra time to do the evaluation, go over the results, and make the appropriate recommendations. Why not call now, while the thought is fresh in your head?

## Are You Aerobic?

This is an important question to ask. Many people with good intentions begin a workout routine thinking they are going to "exercise aerobically" without fully understanding what they are doing. Just breathing heavily does not mean you are exercising at the correct heart rate. If you want to use aerobic exercise to improve your health, it's important to understand the following:

You need to exercise at a specific pace unique to yourself, governed by what your heart is doing in relationship to your current level of health.

Aerobic exercise is a slow moving activity such as jogging, biking, or



*Gradually increasing, maintaining, and then decreasing your heart rate is the best way to improve your overall health.*

*(continued on page 3)*

## Are You Aerobic *(continued from page 2)*

swimming, that repeats over and over again at a pace that is both constant and specific for you. It increases your health while requiring sodium as its primary electrolyte, which is necessary for the conversion of energy within cells. Aerobic exercise burns fat for fuel and produces 225% more energy than its counterpart, anaerobic exercise.

Anaerobic exercise is fast-paced for short periods of time and includes activities such as lifting weights, running sprints, and playing tennis and basketball. It increases fitness, that is, your ability to perform a physical activity, and requires potassium as the primary electrolyte for the exchange of energy within cells. It burns sugar as its primary source of fuel.

Burning fat for fuel with aerobic exercise improves your health, while burning sugar for fuel with anaerobic exercise improves your fitness. If you want to improve your health, and who doesn't, while also improving your fitness level, exercising aerobically is the best, most efficient way to do that. The improved health associated with aerobic activity also improves fitness by enabling your heart and body to perform more efficient physical activity through better function.

### *How to Tell If You're Aerobic*

If you've tried aerobic exercise before, you may remember the former way of determining your aerobic range (your target heart-rate zone). Using the old method, the range was 60% to 80% of the number derived from subtracting your age from 220. This formula was not only difficult to calculate, but allowed all people of the same age to exercise at the same rate, regardless of their levels of health or fitness. Thus, a 50-year-old who had never exercised and was in poor health would receive the same range as a 50-year-old who exercised daily, a situation that could lead to injury and possibly even a heart attack.

The new, more accurate way to determine your Aerobic Exercise Zone is use the MAF (Maximum Aerobic Functioning) Formula, developed by Dr. Phillip Maffetone. Using the MAF formula, the zone is found by first subtracting your age from the number 180 and then modifying the resulting number based on the following criteria:

- Subtract 10 if you have an illness or are recovering from surgery, or if you are on medication
- Subtract 5 if you have not exercised before or are regressing in your efforts, if you get colds/flu's more than twice a year, or if you have allergies
- Neither add nor subtract if you have been exercising for the past couple of years without injury
- Add 5 if you have been exercising regularly for more than two years without injury and are making steady progress.

The resulting number, which takes into consideration both your age and your health, is your Maximum Aerobic Heart Rate (MAHR). You don't want your heart rate to go above that number when you are exercising.

Next, subtract 10 from your MAHR to get your Lower Aerobic Heart Rate (LAHR). You must keep your heart rate above this number to remain aerobic. Anything above your MAHR and below your LAHR will be anaerobic, will no longer strengthen your heart, and will burn sugar, not fat, for fuel.

Once you have determined your Aerobic Exercise Zone, you will want to employ the following guidelines:

Slowly begin your aerobic activity by gradually increasing your heart rate over ten to fifteen minutes until you reach your Aerobic Exercise Zone.

Once in the zone, maintain your current pace for a minimum of 20 minutes. Doing so will get your body to begin burning fat for fuel.

Once you have finished the length of time you feel necessary to exercise, gradually decrease your heart rate back down to what it was when you started. Ideally, this should take between ten and fifteen minutes.

Following this pattern of gradually increasing, maintaining, and then decreasing your heart rate is the best way to improve your overall health, the strength of your heart, and the ability of your body to turn fat, which further helps to improve your health.

### *What You Should Consider*

If you are interested in improving your health maximally, you'll want to get started on an aerobic exercise routine. By adopting the above guidelines, and also using a heart rate monitor, you will increase your health to its highest level possible.

Using a heart rate monitor will allow you to monitor your rate throughout the exercise routine. Monitors come in all shapes and sizes, but you'll want to consider getting one that allows you to set your upper and lower zone limits and has an alarm. When you're in your target zone, the alarm will stay quiet, as you improve your health and lose weight at the same time. If the alarm starts beeping, a glance at the display will show whether you're above or below your target zone, and you can then simply speed up or slow down accordingly. A heart rate monitor takes the guesswork out of workouts and allows you to concentrate more on your aerobic activity.

### *My Offer To You*

To All Practice Members and Non-Members alike: If you would like my help with computing your ideal Aerobic Zone and setting up your heart rate monitor, simply come to the office and I will take the time to do both. If you need to purchase a heart rate monitor, you can get one at Dick's Sporting Goods. Those manufactured by Polar usually allow you to set the upper and lower heart rate limits and include an alarm. Stop by the office as soon as you can and let me get you on your aerobic way. If you want to become thinner and healthier, why waste any more time than you have to, or than you already have?



# Quotes of the month with Dr. Richard Huntoon

*There is no shortcut. Victory lies in overcoming obstacles every day. Choose well. Your choice is brief and yet endless.*

**Goethe**

*In difficult situations when hope seems feeble, the boldest plans are safest.*

**Livy**

*It's time for all of us to cheer for the doer, the achiever — the one who recognizes the challenge and does something about it.*

**Vince Lombardi**

*Whatever you attempt, go at it with spirit. Develop your own manner of living life on the edge, on your own terms. Activity is the only road to knowledge.*

**George Bernard Shaw**

*The law of culture is to let each of us become all that we are capable of being. Do what you can where you are with what you got.*

**Theodore Roosevelt**

*We each build our own future. We are the architects of our own fortunes.*

**Appius Caecus**

*Life is like riding a bicycle. You don't fall off unless you stop pedaling. Who can say with certainty that one will live to see tomorrow?*

**Tibetan proverb**

*A good beginning is half the battle.*

**Portuguese Proverb**

*If you fell down yesterday, stand up today.*

**H.G. Wells**

*The great doing of little things makes the great life.*

**Eugenia Price**

***I Hope You Have Enjoyed These Quotes  
As Much As I Have Enjoyed Bringing Them to You!***

# Happy Independence Day

