

Body Tissue Correspondences

In Master Tung's acupuncture, many points that correlate with standard textbook TCM points are purposefully relocated closer to bones, tendons or blood vessels. Because these points are needled close to the corresponding tissues, their therapeutic effects are enhanced so they may treat conditions of that same tissue type elsewhere in the body, as well as the zang organ associated with that tissue. This is called "Body Tissue Correspondence," and it means that Kidney and bone treat bone; Liver and tendon treat tendon; Spleen and muscle treat muscle; and Heart and blood vessel treat blood vessel.

Bone treats bone

We use the bone-treating-bone correspondence frequently when needling Tung's points. Because the Kidney is associated with bone, whenever we contact bone with our needling, it lends the point an additional Kidney tonification function that would not happen otherwise. I find this needling technique extraordinarily useful and use it to activate this marvelous bone-treating-bone system whenever I possibly can.

Because the periosteum (the protective covering of the bone) can be damaged by unintentional impact, we want to very gently and very specifically touch the bone in such a way that the additional Kidney function can be utilized without damaging the periosteum or the bone.

Contacting the bone is done in different ways, depending upon which point we are needling and the direction of the needle insertion. For example, when we needle 77.01-77.02 Correct Tendons for the spine (and especially the neck), we needle perpendicularly through the Achilles tendon, making sure that our point of insertion is precisely midway, latitudinally, on the flat surface of the tendon. By carefully inserting the needle mid-tendon, we can be sure that with deep insertion (using a 50mm needle) the needle tip will contact the posterior surface of the tibia and thus powerfully tonify the Kidney. This tonification function is especially advantageous when we are targeting

a weakness or an injury in the cervical vertebrae (in particular), or the spine. If we were not careful to begin our insertion precisely in the midpoint of the tendon, it is likely that our deep needle would slide to one side or the other of the tibia, potentially injuring the periosteum. The needle tip contacting the lateral or medial periosteum of the tibia and “skidding” down the side of the bone creates an electrical sensation that wraps around the bone. This sensation might not be particularly uncomfortable, but it does indicate a mild violation of the protective covering. If this were done repeatedly, both the periosteum and the bone could be damaged. When we needle Correct Tendons properly, we can be confident that it is only the very tip of the needle that will gently tap the back of the tibia. As we take this deep needle down with our whole attention and place our consciousness in the tip of the needle, just before our needle tap we will be able to perceive an extremely subtle density change that signals imminent contact with the periosteum and the bone.

It is absolutely essential that you teach yourself this level of awareness when needling. When you know with your own senses the exact tissues you are penetrating, you will find that this awareness provides you with much information. Your intention with the needle will not only direct the combined energy of practitioner and patient swiftly to the targeted area, but also lend the Kidney strengthening function and more than double the therapeutic response. It is precisely this kind of subtle embodied experience that the seasoned practitioner can utilize to achieve superior results.

This same needle technique is utilized when needling points such as 88.25 Center Nine Miles (GB31) and anytime we are intentionally, very gently contacting a bone with the tip of a needle. This is how we stimulate the bone-treating-bone Kidney function appropriately.

We also apply our conscious awareness in another type of bone needling. When patients have a chronic condition, I frequently suggest the addition of Tung’s Master Kidney Point 77.18 Shen Guan. This point is found 1.5 cun distal to SP9 on the posterior border of the tibia. When we are needling Shen Guan, or any of the Emperor points on the

Spleen channel (of which Shen Guan is primary), we always try to needle as close to the posterior border of the tibia as possible. Be aware of the blood vessel that runs the entire length of the medial tibia, and do your best to needle between the vessel and the bone in order to avoid bruising. It is also important not to contact the tibia or the periosteum with the tip of the needle, as this would potentially injure both. Rather, we want to contact the bone by sliding the smooth surface of the needle shaft alongside the periosteum that wraps the bone. This pressure through the periosteum is what stimulates the bone-treating-bone Kidney function of these already powerful points.

We apply this same concept and needle technique whenever we wrap a needle around a bone. A curving needle technique is created by inserting the tip and then introducing a curve in the shaft by holding the handle at a 90-degree angle to the tip. The goal is to insert the needle between the bone and the muscle or tendon, as the contact between the needle shaft and the smooth surface of the bone provides a Kidney function. The muscle or tendon applies pressure against the shaft, continuously stimulating the bone until the needle is removed. Those of you who have read *Volume One* will recognize this curving needle technique; it is found in the Needling Notes for many points, such as 11.06 Return to the Nest, 22.04 Da Bai, 22.08 Wrist Prosperous (Tung's SI3), 33.12 Heart Gate, 66.10 (Tung's SP3), 66.11 (Tung's SP4), UB65 Shu Gu, and Two or Three Emperors.

Tendon treats tendon

Needling close to a tendon, or all the way through one, lends a tendon-treating-tendon function that controls wind and relieves spasms. Because tendons and ligaments are governed by the Liver, needling alongside or through them addresses issues related to wood, wind, twitching, spasms, tension, tendons and ligaments. This correspondence ripples throughout the entire body when we consciously slide the shaft of our needle alongside or through a major tendon. 33.16 Curve Mound (LU5) is a good example of this, as it is an excellent choice for both frozen shoulder and tendonitis of the forearm, and if we were using it for either of those reasons it would also simultaneously address menstrual cramping. Though I would never intentionally use LU5 for dysmenorrhea, it

would be a fortunate side effect for a woman experiencing a painful period while being treated for her frozen shoulder, because tendon treats tendon and also relieves spasm anywhere in the body, even the uterus. This example simply demonstrates the systemic nature of these tissue correspondences.

We previously discussed the bone-treating-bone function of Tung's 77.01-77.02 Correct Tendons. Since we are needling through the Achilles tendon, we are at the same time activating the tendon-treating-tendon function, making these points the most powerful choice for neck injuries and spinal problems in general. By inserting the needles deeply through the Achilles tendon and gently tapping the tibia, we are effectively treating both tendon/wind/Liver and bone/Kidney. It is this combination of functions that makes Correct Tendons unsurpassed when it comes to treating whiplash, occipital headaches, brain injuries, scoliosis, ankylosing spondylitis, and many other spinal conditions.

Because tendon treats tendon, we also needle Correct Tendons to simultaneously treat opposite-side injuries to the Achilles tendon, plantar fasciitis, calf spasms or spasm anywhere in the body.

Muscle treats muscle (and skin)

Needling into large muscles treats muscular disorders anywhere in the body, but also treats the skin. Because skin is governed by the Lungs, and muscle is governed by the Spleen, we can associate needling into muscle with the Tai Yin. 88.17-88.19 Four Horses are a wonderful example of treating both muscular disorders and skin diseases. Because large muscles have an enormous nerve and blood supply, by deeply needling Four Horses we contact Yuan (source) qi for the treatment of conditions such as muscular sclerosis, muscle atrophy or fibromyalgia. If we deeply needle the same points and then draw the needles to the surface level, Four Horses becomes one of the most powerful point patterns for acute or chronic skin diseases that may be difficult to treat. By the

way, Four Horses are my all-time favorite points in Tung's acupuncture system. *Please see Volume One for our extensive commentary on Four Horses and skin disease.*

Vessel treats vessel

Needling close to (or into) blood vessels treats the Heart and the entire circulatory system. Because blood vessel treats blood vessel, many textbook acupuncture points related to the Heart are located over blood vessels such as LU9 Tai Yuan,¹ PC6 Nei Guan, and LV3 Tai Chong. In Tung's acupuncture, we use 66.04 Fire Master (Tung's LV3) to strengthen the heart, especially when there is a thready, weak or feeble pulse, a pale face and cold affect. Fire Master is often needled as the Chief Point with 66.03 Fire Hardness because together they strengthen the heart via the Liver/Pericardium/Heart connection, making them a useful choice not only in heart diseases and liver blood diseases, but also in emergency cardiovascular situations.

Combining tissue correspondences

In Tung's system we frequently combine tissue correspondences in order to achieve even greater results. These combinations can be illustrated using Fire Master (Tung's LV3).

It is said in Tung's acupuncture that all points with "Heart" or "Fire" in their name also treat the knee. This is interesting for multiple reasons. Fire Master (Tung's LV3) is a great Guiding Point for knee pain and groin issues, especially when combined with opposite-side 33.12 Heart Gate or PC6, in part because all three have a strong relationship to blood and blood vessels, as we have previously discussed, and there are many blood vessels that transit the knee.

¹ Interestingly, because LU9 is located directly over an artery and is the Hui-Meeting point of the vessels, it is able to regulate and harmonize the pulse.

Not only does the Jue Yin (PC/LV) have a strong connection to the blood, but also PC6 is found between two tendons. Because Liver governs tendons/ligaments, and because the knee and the groin are stabilized by a network of powerful ligaments, the Jue Yin unites both tissue correspondences: blood vessel treating blood vessel and tendon treating tendon.

Additionally, when textbook LV3 is needled higher up on the dorsum of the foot, it becomes 66.04 Fire Master (Tung's LV3). When needling Fire Master, we slide the shaft of our needle down the distal side of the proximal junction of the first and second metatarsal bones, effectively adding a bone-treating-bone Kidney function to the point. Thus, Fire Master utilizes vessel-treating-vessel, tendon-treating-tendon and bone-treating-bone concepts, simultaneously stimulating Heart, Liver and Kidney influences.

We can deepen our connection to structural treatment by understanding that Fire Master is acting as textbook LV3 Tai Chong, the Yuan-Source/Shu-Stream point and earth point on a wood channel. When we needle Fire Master closer to the bone (Kidney), it tonifies Liver (wood), Spleen (earth) and Kidney (water), creating a wonderful way to treat wind, damp and cold, perfect for arthritic conditions that affect tendons, muscles and joints.