

Shiatsu and Colds

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Violent colds can be released through Shiatsu under unfavorable conditions, and existing colds can be aggravated. This article reports why this can happen, how it can be avoided, and how colds can be treated with success.

Nearly every Shiatsu practitioner will have the experience that a treated person develops a heavy cold after a Shiatsu treatment. When the client has gotten over it, this person might even report that this was the most violent cold they have had in many years.

Frequently, this event is interpreted as if the treatment released a necessary purification process (which is to be welcomed), or that the body of the sick person got itself sick because it urgently needed rest. That may be right. However, in many cases, it will be shown that above all, the Shiatsu treatment weakened the *Wei Qi* Wei Qi - a Chinese term, which designates the outer range in the defense system of humans (see also below). temporarily, and that is not at all always desirable.

How can this be? How can Shiatsu, which supposedly has hardly any side effects and always does well, temporarily weaken the defense system of a person? We need attentive observation, a good theoretical basis, and suitable techniques in order to be able to gain the right experiences, and, through this, to understand what happens in these situations.

Let us first look at the person, who reacts to a Shiatsu treatment in this way. Usually - not always - we get warnings before the treatment that in this person a cold "is advancing." Either our partner has already been ill for 1 or 2 days, or he is feeling shivery, and reports that he may have caught a cold.

With some experience, one will begin to suspect the cold beginning - even, if it hasn't broken out yet - in the face of the person, in his posture, or just in the way he feels to us. Those who repeatedly feel the pulse of their clients

(which is highly recommended) will notice that the pulse is more rapid, more strained, and more superficial than otherwise. Normally, I will tell my clients that I will treat them differently during this time than otherwise... unless they insist on "their" cold.

Avoid depth relaxation and stimulate Wei Qi

The treatment, which follows then, is usually more brief than otherwise; it takes 35 minutes at the most. I try to avoid that the person "dives deep" (that means relaxes deeply), so I mostly work relatively rapidly and animating.

Additionally, I use a technique, which I have developed with people that always became very cold during Shiatsu: I rub with relatively large pressure over the clothes of my partner (which, hopefully, aren't made from synthetic fibers or mohair wool), so that the body surface there becomes not only warm, but also really hot. I apply this heating technique particularly in the process of the *lung meridian* on the upper arm, within the range of the *lung diagnostic zone* (and *bladder 12*) on the upper back, and if the person is very cold, also to the lower kidney zone in the lumbar region.

One must rub quite strongly. While one hand rubs, the other one fixes the clothes with a light pull (in such a way, it is avoided that the clothes are only pushed back and forth by the movement of the hand and thus diminish the heat that evolves through the rubbing). *This technique might not suit every practitioner. It is quite physical. The pressure, which produces the warmth together with rubbing, is high, and one needs muscle strength, in order to maintain it. The treating person also becomes quite warm thereby. Usually, it requires some exercise to work fine and sensitive nevertheless, and not from the shoulders but from the whole body and Hara.*

Usually, the clients report afterwards that they feel much better than before. If they were cold before (which is a rule with a beginning cold, thus the name), they are now usually clearly warmer and more comfortable - this effect is

often very pronounced.

Finally, I massage quite strongly (and also somewhat painfully) the points *large intestine 4* and *11*. After the treatment, I give the client the task to massage both of these points at home 3 to 4 times daily for 2 minutes just as strongly.

In addition to these special techniques, I take a look at the lung energy of this person. With a normal acute cold, the Hara diagnostic zone of the lung is usually remarkable; in the typical case it is somewhat strained. If it appears rather empty and strength-less there probably was a weakness of the lung before the cold (e.g. a chronic inclination to colds), which can also be responsible for the outbreak of the illness.

Just as important as the condition of the lung energy, is the condition of the organ energy that is responsible for the fact that the lung got sick. This can be, for example, liver, gallbladder, stomach, or spleen/ pancreas. However, it can also be any of the other organ energies. The Hara diagnosis tells us more. I then treat the energies concerned as attentively and clearly as possible in their most important ranges (with lung e.g. frequently the flows at the arm and the upper thorax - according to Masunaga. But, also within the range of the diagnostic zone on the upper back). With the goal being to facilitate the flow of Ki and to make the balancing process easier.

This way of treatment has proven itself quite successful in my practice. I estimate that approximately 70 to 80% of the clients have a clear positive reaction. In the ideal case, they report that they came home and were well. It may also be that the cold was clearly more easy and more brief than otherwise, or that it was (contrary to otherwise) remarkably violent but short. The resonance is often not so defined when the cold was already fully under way, and/or if an emotional situation on a long-term basis has weakened the lung. However, this way of treatment is also often surprisingly helpful in such cases.

“Perverse influences”

The effect of such a "cold-treatment" can be explained very well on the basis of the model of ill-making, bio-climatic factors, as well as the layer model of the human defense system. Both are parts of the theory of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Concerning the model of the bio-climatic influences (also casually called "perverse influences") we only need to understand the conception that diseases can be released, if external disease factors, which in TCM carry climatic names and characteristics, can penetrate a person. The ill-making bio-climatic factors penetrating from the outside are according to the theory of TCM wind, heat, cold, humidity, dryness and summer heat (extreme heat). The Condition for the development of its ill-making effect is that there exists an imbalance in the person already, which favors the penetration of the according factor. With a cold, mostly wind and coldness or wind and heat play a role. The wind shows itself in muscle and joint pain, the climatic factor cold shows, among other things, in freezing or shivering, and heat e.g. in high fevers and strong sore throats...

A graduated defense system in the person faces, from the outside, threatening bio-climatic factors. The more deeply a climatic influence can penetrate, the heavier such an illness becomes.

The outermost defense line is governed by lung. The energy there is very active (yang) and is promoted by an active life. In Chinese, it is called *Wei Qi*. On the body-level, this defense line is in the skin, the subcutaneous connective tissue, and the muscles underneath. A normal cold (e.g. with pains in the joints, sore throat, and shivering) is an expression of a fight with the penetrating factors on the level of the *Wei Qi*.

It is only natural that the outermost defense line must deal most frequently with an aggressor. This is why colds are the most frequent illness of humans.

Alpha state deceives the defense system

When a person goes into the "alpha state" between waking and sleeping during a Shiatsu treatment, the outer range of his defense system is quasi "lulled." Gates, more or less locked in everyday life, open wide. Substantial parts of the positive benefits of Shiatsu are based on this effect. The superficial layers of the defense system are very yang, and are stimulated by

being active. There is a tendency that these are then deactivated by deep relaxation and peace (as becomes possible in Shiatsu). In many cases with a beginning cold, lying in bed will lead to a full outbreak of the cold while maintaining intensive activity can let it disappear possibly even overnight. In the case that one of the reasons for the cold is exhaustion and a lack of rest, a "working away" of the cold through maintaining over-activity, one naturally still continues to strengthen the causes, so that they could show up later all the more violently.

In such a deeply relaxed state, the bioclimatic factors can penetrate deeply in the person concerned (if within this person there is an internal arrangement present which enables this, as is the case with a cold). In the most unfavorable case (rarely), a heavy illness could be caused in such a way. It is therefore obvious that with a beginning cold, deep relaxation and opening mean an additional risk, and therefore should be avoided.

The heat, which is produced by the strong rubbing on the clothes of the client, directly stimulates, on one hand, the lung *ki* on the upper arm. On the upper back lies an important point above the *Yu-point* for the lung (*bladder 13*) on *bladder 12*, which, in the traditional opinion, is an entrance gate for wind illnesses not only of the lung. This point just like the *Yu-point lung* and the entire *lung diagnostic zone* in this area are activated, strengthened, and sealed by rubbing.

Moreover, the heat strengthens the superficial defense system of the person and his *Wei Qi* (heat is yang). In addition, it works against coldness that might have penetrated into the body: The treated person feels warmer and better deep on the inside afterwards.

The points *large intestine 4* and *11* finally are among the most important points for the general stimulation of the defense forces (especially in the torso), in Acupuncture and Acupressure. Unfortunately, *LI 11*, in particular in the case of a cold, is very pain-sensitive. So, the whole empathy of the practitioner is demanded to treat it effectively nonetheless. *It's interesting that usually only one of the two points LI 11 is particularly sensitive, usually the one on the left arm. LI 11 on the right arm is in my experience only the more painful in approximately 30% of the cases. Why this is, I do not know.* The condition is that the practitioner is familiar with the exact location of The condition

is that the practitioner is familiar with the exact location of the points, deep below the surface. Only when the attention of the practitioner actually sinks into this center while he is working there, does the treatment become effective.

By the way, the points can also be activated by an easy rotary contact. But, the relaxation of the client would be promoted too much. Besides, the client is supposed to do the applied techniques at home afterwards; and most "too subtle" techniques are not as easy for unpracticed people to copy as strong massaging.

Those who are knowledgeable in acupuncture can also set needles in *LI 4* and *11* after such a cold-treatment. As in many other situations, needles can support the effect of a Shiatsu treatment. But, of course, Shiatsu is also effective without needles.

It takes some time to become familiar with this kind of treatment. In particular, the intensive rubbing and stimulation of the points is unusual for many people. However, when one becomes familiar with this understanding and the techniques involved, one has the possibility to work effectively (and without damage) with people that are getting a cold or have one already.

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