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## **Introduction**

Health and Weight Management is all about stress and lifestyle management. Life circumstances such as stressful work, parenting, financial problems, divorce etc can throw us out of balance.

We can get completely caught up in one area of our lives to the detriment of the rest including our health and well-being. We may stop getting enough exercise, exist on a substandard diet and lose our sense of equilibrium. We need to take a virtual helicopter ride over our life to see what areas are red danger/stress zones and decide what we can do to make changes. Many people wait until they reach a health crisis before making changes but it is easier to start making changes now.

In the theory of Yin and Yang all things are constantly balancing and rebalancing. In the East there has been a tradition of mind body exercise since antiquity. The practice of Yoga in India dates back over 5,000 years. Tai Chi dates back 700 to 1500 years ago. Chinese Medicine in which the theory of Yin and Yang is central includes Acupuncture, Acupressure, Herbal medicine, Tai Chi and Qi Gong . One of the core beliefs is that the body's 'life force' or energy called Qi is circulating through channels called meridians in the body. These channels are linked to the organs of the body.

Western medicine is based on diagnosis. In Oriental Medicine, originating in China and practiced throughout the East in Japan, Korea and now worldwide, the treatment depends on the underlying imbalance. Illness and other

emotional, mental and physical problems arise when the flow of Qi energy is weak or stagnated. Restoring the flow of Qi is crucial to balance yin and yang and to achieve health and wellness.

I include chapters on Self Care, Emotions, Diet and Nutrition, Acupuncture and Acupressure, Tai Chi, Qi Gong, Herbs, Meditation, Lung health and Chinese Medicine theory. I have also written a chapter on Healthy Recipes and Remedies. Throughout the book I explain how Health and Weight Management go hand in hand. Health and Weight Management is not about punishing routines or diets, it is about finding a balance in our life, in physical activity, mind body exercise and food. In my chapter on Lung health, I examine how building Lung Qi is important in building resistance to infections and viruses.

In some of the major hospitals in China specialising in Western medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine may also be offered. Many doctors in China who train in Western medicine take Traditional Chinese Medicine studies as part of their training. Western medicine and Traditional Chinese Medicine can be used at the same time and are complementary; helping to boost the immune system fight and prevent illness.

In Acupuncture and Medical Herbalism a clinical examination may include taking a family history of illness and the lifestyle of the client (especially work/life balance). More and more people are turning to Qi Gong, Acupuncture, Acupressure and Tai Chi to not only fight disease but to prevent it. Historically in the East, there is a more preventative approach to illness; a

tradition of people going for treatment to keep well before becoming ill.

Tai chi and Qi Gong are mind body exercises which activate the flow of Qi in the body, removing blockages. By integrating acupuncture and acupressure in your wellness plan you will help maintain Qi energy flow.

The mind body connection has never been so relevant. In my chapter on Self-Care I deal with taking responsibility for self-care and developing awareness of our emotions.

On a personal note, my interest in the East started when I was a child. My uncle Joseph was a Chef with a passion for healthy food and travel. He lived in Australia and San Francisco for many years where he had Chinese friends from the food industry. He travelled in the East, writing to my mother from Japan. He also attended Yoga classes with Walt Baptiste, the famous yoga teacher in San Francisco. When he returned to Ireland he started a delicatessen business in Phibsboro, Dublin. I worked in his shop as a teenager and his interest in health and food made a huge impression on me.

My interest in Tai Chi started when I attended classes in my early 20's with Dr Deng (who was also an acupuncturist) off Grafton street in Dublin. I also got to know his wife who was learning English. They later returned to China. I have practiced both Yang and Chen styles of Tai Chi and Qi Gong and trained as an acupuncturist. I also trained as a Tai Chi instructor with Dr Paul Lam of the Tai Chi for Health Institute.

When you learn to cultivate self awareness through the mind body exercises and meditation you will learn to value your mind

and body and see your health as your wealth. This is a lifetime's challenge, we can be doing well for a while but we can all slip back; we have to maintain a state of awareness to bring ourselves back into balance. Your health is your wealth!

- "Love your neighbour as you love yourself"-Mark 12:31.

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