



by Mary Elizabeth Wakefield, L. Ac., M. S., M. M.
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If spas are the healing sanctuaries of our future, then it's little wonder that there is an enormous increase in facial acupuncture as a modality in both destination and day spas and wellness centres.

The lure of “healthy vanity” is quite a profound motivator, but unlike cosmetic surgery, facial acupuncture is supported by almost five millennia of documentation, experience and success in achieving its twin aims of greater length of life and the maintenance of vitality and harmony, both inner and outer. If it was good enough for the Emperors and Empresses of China, why shouldn't it work for us?

Advanced cultures have always recognised the intrinsic links between optimum health and physical beauty. It was the ancient Chinese who began this dual quest for longevity and beauty some 5,000 years ago, during the Qing dynasty. There are accounts from 221BC of Chinese physicians who practised what we would call dermatology, in conjunction with other disciplines. In texts that have survived from this era, such as the *Nei Jing* and *Shan Han Lun*, the practitioner is directed to synergise the following five protocols so as to preserve beauty and enhance the length of life: Herbal therapies/Diet, i.e., the consumption of appropriate foods, *Tui-na* Massage, *Qi-gong* and Acupuncture.

Facial acupuncture has been principally intended to address constitutional imbalances. In China, the ancients believed in fostering longevity through an emphasis on rest, exercise, diet, herbs, good elimination, sufficient fluids and a general balance of body/mind/spirit. Because it nurtured quality of life, energy and creativity, acupuncture that focused on the face was not seen as separate from that which addressed the well-being of the entire body.

Constitutional Facial Acupuncture is a safe, painless and effective treatment for renewing the face as well as the whole body. Fine lines may be entirely erased, deeper lines reduced and bags around neck and eyes firmed. Fine needles are placed at a variety of acupuncture points on the face, neck and around the eyes to stimulate the body's natural energies, or *qi*. Since muscle groups are addressed as well the acupuncture points, the face lifts itself, via the acupuncture points, through the muscles' toning and tightening action. The needles also stimulate blood and circulation, which improves facial colour.

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- Diet, i.e., the consumption of appropriate foods
- Acupuncture
- Tui-na massage
- Qi-gong

THE ORIENTAL PERSPECTIVE OF BEAUTY

Chinese medicine presents us with a model that at its core combines both art and science; as such, it can incorporate within its purview both music and poetry. In keeping with this idea, it comes as no surprise to find references to beauty in one of the ancient texts, a book of odes, or songs (poems) that was compiled during the Bronze Age, circa 600 BCE.

These books were structured in a question-and-answer format, in which the Empress would ask the physician how to maintain her beauty. In this particular example, when the physician is asked to describe a beautiful face, his response is “clear.” A beautiful face is clear.

Therefore, if a particular face doesn’t exhibit this clarity, it is not beautiful. Finally, of course, the Shen, or spirit, is a combination of the color, radiance and expression of the face. All of these qualities comprise the ancient Chinese definition of beauty.

HOW DOES FACIAL ACUPUNCTURE WORK?

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REVERSING AGING; NOURISHING THE 3 TREASURES

The *Nei Jing* recommends that, in order to preserve a “clear” face, promote beauty and enhance longevity, it is necessary to address the Three Treasures throughout the entire time of treatment:

Jing (hereditary essence)

Therefore, in *Constitutional Facial Acupuncture™*, the practitioner always treats the body first, addressing the patient’s individual constitutional landscape. The first level of this aspect of the patient’s makeup is the Jing, or ancestral energy. Jing is reflected in our genetic inheritance, and manifests itself in the bone structure of the face and body; the more prominent this component, the more Jing and potential is available to them. In this initial phase of treatment, we support the Jing by employing the Eight Extraordinary meridians (energy pathways), which run deeply within the body. We are therefore able to tap into and nourish the DNA/RNA of the individual cells.

Qi (energy)

The next structural component is the Qi, which manifests most visibly in the changing nature of the skin during the aging process. Acupuncture points and meridians are used on the face and body to treat puffy, sagging, dry, cracked or wrinkled flesh. Imbalances are addressed by supporting the Qi, which brings fresh

IS FACIAL ACUPUNCTURE FOR EVERYONE?

It would probably be more instructive to list the few contraindications for facial acupuncture, because, for the vast majority of prospective clients, it is a safe and beneficial treatment, not only for prevention of wrinkles, but also the reversal of the customary signs of aging.

Contraindications:

- Severe high blood pressure (it is OK when the blood pressure is under control and the patient is seeing a medical doctor)
- Severe migraines (if the patient is having a migraine only once every 3 months or so, they can receive facial acupuncture treatments)
- Be aware that it takes a patient 3 weeks to recover from laser resurfacing on the face. Do not needle during that time; wait a week after microdermabrasion.

Do not perform during:

1. pregnancy;
2. colds or flu;
3. acute herpes outbreak; or
4. acute allergic reactions

In the latter 3 instances, once the condition has passed, the patient may receive a facial acupuncture treatment.

HOW LONG IS THE TREATMENT?

Constitutional Facial Acupuncture[™] involves the patient in an organic process, in which a series of treatments is necessary to achieve maximal effect. After an initial session, practitioner evaluates the patient's response, and then can determine the number of follow-up visits that will be required:

After this evaluation, and taking into consideration other variables such as stress, diet, lifestyle, genetic inheritance, proper digestion and elimination, sleep, emotional balance, and age, the following durations of treatment are customarily recommended:

- Usually 10-12 treatments;
- 20 treatments for smokers or people whose skin tends to sag, i.e., who manifest jowls, "turkey wattles," droopy eyes, etc.

It should be noted that age is not as crucial as might be estimated; an older patient with a healthy lifestyle may in fact have a better prognosis than a younger person who is prone to dissipate themselves.

blood and color to the face by enhancing circulation and fluid metabolism.

Shen (spirit)

Shen is the light that shines forth from someone's eyes when they are connected to their heart energy, or compassion. It is the clarity and radiance manifested in the face when the emotions are balanced. As a component of physical beauty, it creates the impression of joy and well-being.

TREATMENT TIMELINE:

- 2 times a week (if possible), for 45 minutes to 1 hour; or
- 1 treatment per week, 90 minutes

BOOSTER TREATMENTS:

Within the normal parameters of aging, the completion of a series of treatments should be effective. To maintain the results, ongoing booster treatments are recommended:

- Every 2 weeks for 2 months following the completion of a treatment series, then once a month for an indefinite amount of time;
- Of course, the patient can also embark upon a subsequent series after a week's respite

THE USE OF CHINESE HERBS

The *Constitutional Facial Acupuncture*[™] treatment protocol incorporates Chinese herbal masks, poultices and moisturizers. Jade rollers, which enhance blood circulation, remove fine lines and age spots, and prevent premature aging, are used to massage moisturizer into the skin. The ancient empresses of China used jade as a precious stone to be worn, not only around their necks, but also to attract *yin* and nourishment into their skin. The stone served a double purpose of promoting beauty and for magical protection.

SHORT AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF FACIAL ACUPUNCTURE

After the first treatment, one usually observes an increased glow to the complexion, the result of increased Qi and blood flow to the face. The person's face appears more "open", there is a clarity in the eyes ("clear Shen"), and the patient appears to be more rested; wrinkles start to lessen and the skin appears more toned.

A significant difference in their appearance can be ascertained following the 5th to 7th treatments; even more marked changes in wrinkles, skin tone, etc. The impression of relaxation and calm is more pronounced; they appear as if they have returned from vacation. Lifting of the jowls, neck and the eyes has begun and is usually noticeable. With continuing treatment, constitutional issues like digestive complaints have been ameliorated or subsided.

By the end of a series, the patient should look and feel 5-15 years younger. These results may vary slightly, depending upon how well the patient has taken care of themselves during the process, and afterward. At this stage, booster treatments provide ongoing support within a normal process of aging.

Constitutional Facial Acupuncture[™] is non-invasive, less costly than surgical procedures, and draws upon the ancient Chinese wisdom related to longevity, beauty and balance.

BENEFITS OF CONSTITUTIONAL FACIAL ACUPUNCTURE RENEWAL[™]

Constitutional:

- Improves acne (caused by hormonal imbalance)
- Helps menopause, perimenopause, PMS and other GYN issues
- Helps sinus congestion and headache
- Improves hyper- and hypothyroidism

- Reduces symptoms of toothache, TMJ, trigeminal neuralgia, and Bell's palsy
- Helps headaches (except severe migraine)
- Treats diarrhea and constipation (most digestive issues)
- Helps to eliminate edema and puffiness
- Benefits eyes, ears and brain
- Can help insomnia and dizziness
- Helps depression and aids self-esteem

Facial:

- Improves collagen production and muscle tone
- Helps reduce bags and sagging tendencies
- Helps eliminate fine lines and diminish larger wrinkles
- Helps reduce double chin and lift drooping eyelids
- Improves metabolism
- Tightens pores and brightens eyes
- Increases local blood and lymph circulation
- Improves facial color
- Reduces stress and promotes total health and well-being

BIO: MARY ELIZABETH WAKEFIELD



Mary Elizabeth Wakefield has 24 years of clinical professional experience in the healing arts. She is a licensed acupuncturist, certified by the NCCAOM, a Zen Shiatsu practitioner, massage therapist, a cranio-sacral therapist, Acutonics® practitioner, opera singer, herbalist and Interfaith minister.

Mary Elizabeth is a graduate of Tri-State College of Acupuncture in New York City, and has studied with such notable acupuncturists as Carolyn Bengston, Kiiko Matsumoto, Dr. Mark Seem, Arya Nielson, Jeffrey Yuen, Dr. Richard Tan, Fabien Maman, Yitian Ni and Donna Carey. Her knowledge of facial acupuncture and acupressure is based on the work of Jacques Lavier, the "father of French Acupuncture".

Ms. Wakefield has given her innovative seminars at AZ Acupuncture School and the Desert Healing Center in Tucson, AZ, SBCOM in Santa Barbara, ACTCM in San Francisco, AIMC in Berkeley, and in Orange, Laguna Hills and Oakland, CA, Mercy College, PCOM and Swedish Institute in New York, NY, in Hawaii, Orlando, FL, Santa Fe, NM, Bastyr University in Seattle, WA, Michener Institute in Toronto, CANADA and elsewhere. She has also trained the staff acupuncturists at two locations of the prestigious Canyon Ranch Spa in her facial acupuncture protocols.

In 2001, her work and practice was featured in an issue of *Vegetarian Times*. She been a presenter at 3 consecutive CSOMA Expos, and is slated to appear at a symposium sponsored by Eastern Currents, Ltd., in Vancouver, BC, CANADA in March, 2005, as well as the 12th annual Symposium of the AOM Alliance in Newport, RI, in May, 2005.

Ms. Wakefield is contributing an ongoing column on facial acupuncture and related topics to *Acupuncture Today* magazine, and has also written articles for the *California Journal of Oriental Medicine* and *Oriental Medicine Journal*.

Mary Elizabeth's *Constitutional Facial Acupuncture Renewal™* treatment protocol was recently featured in an interview segment on FOX News that aired nationally. Her practice and treatment protocols will be highlighted in a number of prominent fashion magazines in 2005 - *Allure*, *W*, and *Luxury SpaFinder*.

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