

Treating Chronic Pain: Tibetan Herbal Foot Soaks

Tibetan Foot Soaks is one of the secrets to our success for treating chronic pain. It's also a foot soak that's currently being used all over the world in select clinics.

Healing Benefits of Tibetan Foot Soaks

The Tibetan herbal foot soaks are designed to get rid of blood stasis, wind, cold, and phlegm from the channels. Modern culture has us eating way more than we need to and foods that we really shouldn't: this creates phlegm.

Today we live much more sedentary lifestyles. This already creates less blood flow, but add phlegm on top of that, and now you've got chronic blood stasis. Additionally, this lack of movement and chronic stress (without a proper outlet) leads to increased muscle stiffness as we age, especially in our feet. As the fascia (an inflammation of a thick band of tissue that connects the heel bone to the toes), in our feet become less manageable, the normal shock absorbing actions of our feet become stunted and the impact from our normal day-to-day activities, like walking and going up and down stairs. It starts to be absorbed by our joints (ankles, knees, hips and all the way up the spine). As this progresses, we can end up in that place of overall body stiffness and lack of mobility as we often see in our elderly population.

How Does It Work

If you live in a cold region, like Tibet, the act of turning fat into heat is incredibly important and requires very good peripheral circulation. The foot soaks increase the heart rate as though you're exercising and this is essential for those of us who are no longer able to run and jump like we used to. Being able to have cardiovascular exercise

and being able to break a sweat is just crucial for getting our body's processes back in the right direction.

We find that these soaks are exceptional for nerve pain and neuropathies of the feet, eyes, gout and arthritis. This mixture addresses pain caused by the immune system imbalance, which tends to cause pain that wanders from limb to limb. It aids pain and inflammation caused by gut dysbiosis.

Gut dysbiosis can cause a heavy pain sensation and its associated with brain fog. It gears down nerve pain caused by the deregulation of cortisol and nitric oxide, marked by burning or electric sensations. It influences prostaglandin regulation for sharp pain and has beneficial effects on menstrual cycles.

The sheer act of placing our feet in the warm/hot soak water warms our feet, aids in relaxing the fascia, and dilates the vasculature in our feet and lower legs (very important). The terpenes, found in the herbs, can then carry the precious volatile oils from the herbs in through the skin and into the vascular system (plant terpenes are also being used in making topicals in modern medicines). As the feet soak, the effects penetrate deeper and begin improving circulation throughout the entire body which creates prominent effects on multiple systems. This particular blend was originally used for treating cardiovascular disorders and have decreased coronary blockages in patients.

***With a pulse, you feel warmth spreading from your feet to the crown of your head
new blood vessels support deep systemic healing.***

8 Sacred Herbs & Minerals Used in Tibetan Foot Soaks

Herba Lamiophlomis Rotata/ Du Yi Wei

One of the first herbs in this formula is called Du Yi Wei which stops hemorrhaging. If you have internal bleeding from an injury or inflammation that's causing dilation of the blood vessels this stops it. Du Yi Wei is an antioxidant that promotes red blood cell production and kills pain. Most of these herbs are blood thinning in nature which helps prevent blood clotting. It has a positive effect on [cytokines](#) (cellular communicators), promotes the production of red blood cells, and has a positive effect on [arterial stenosis](#). Here's a bit on its [quality](#).

Rhodiola Tebetica/Hong Jing Tian

Tibetan Rhodiola has become a commonly known remedy for [altitude sickness](#) for its ability to oxygenate the blood. It improves [metabolic functioning](#), has [antioxidant](#) effects, improves [immune function](#), and has some [anti-cancer](#) effects. Hong Jing Tian increases oxygen in the blood and improves immune function and helps people fight fatigue. It is incredibly good for chronic long-term fatigue disorder or people who have been in a state of chronic inflammation.

Stigma Croci/ Zang Hong Hua

This is Tibetan saffron. It is considered stronger (and much more expensive) than traditional saffron. It has [anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving effects](#). It has been used to improve emotional wellbeing, treat cough, increase blood flow, and lower blood pressure. It has notable [antioxidant](#) properties and some reports indicate it may serve as an [aphrodisiac](#).

Most of the blood clots that cause people to have a heart attack or stroke are found in the legs, so the increase in circulation at the same time using herbs to reduce these clots, it can drastically help to improve longevity. By doing these foot soaks as a regular

part of health maintenance it's possible to fend off heart attacks and strokes. This is something that's very commonly used throughout Tibet and China.

Notopterygii Rhizoma ET Radix/ Qiang Huo

Qiang Huo grown at high altitudes like what is used in our foot soaks was at one point reserved for the elite of Beijing. It has [anti-inflammatory](#) and antifungal properties and is widely used for its analgesic effects. Research shows it improves blood flow to the coronary arteries and is useful in the treatment of arrhythmia. [Here's more.](#)

We have sourced high-quality Qiang Huo, which is very important as this herb is traditionally used for arthritis pain, is an anti-inflammatory and inhibits fungus. Fungi in the body can have direct effects on pain signaling and this helps to kill it. This herb also does wonders to help regulate the timing of the heart. Incredibly this herb helps with irregular heart rate. People have a heart rate that's too slow or too fast or have an irregular rhythm. We use this extensively with our cardiology patients and just using this foot soak it's been able to help restore their normal heart rhythm. This herb works very well in conjunction with another Tibetan herb called Hong Jing Tain or Tibetan Rhodiola.

Acori Calami Rhizoma / Zang Chang Pu

Zang Chang Pu has a mild tranquilizing effect to relax people. It is antibacterial and has regulatory effects on the digestive system. This is so crucial for diseases involving the gut brain axis. Some people can't take herbs or supplements but by using Zang Chang Pu transdermally, it's still able to affect their digestion, in a very positive way, without asking their stomach to digest anything new.

Zang Chang Pu is known for its usefulness in treating a variety of neuropathies ([chemo-induced](#), [nerve transection](#), and [chronic constriction](#) type). This may be part of the reason these foot soaks are so often used with sciatica.

Radix Sophorae Fiavescentis / Ku Shen

Ku Shen has a long history of use in Chinese medicine. Often used for skin conditions and has broad spectrum [antimicrobial](#) and [antifungal](#) effects. Ku Shen constituents also exhibit inhibitory effects on bacterial [biofilms](#), an extremely important mechanism for chronic disease conditions. This cannot be understated; biofilms are associated with most chronic diseases in the body. These bacterial properties have gene expression which causes up to 20% of themselves to become mucus. They cover themselves in mucus to avoid the burn of the inflammation as your body goes into fever mode. By covering themselves it allows them to go through the body and spread. Once the inflammation in your body goes down, they begin eating other tissues. Bacterial biofilms are associated with Parkinson's Disease, dementia, and other chronic diseases. Particularly obesity is associated with biofilms. The systemic inflammation causes the body to store fat. Ku Shen in addition is antifungal, antibacterial, antiviral and antiparasitic.

Rhizoma Ziniberis Recens / Gan Jiang

Gan Jiang (ginger) is another wonderful herb in this formula. It is Liver protective. Gan Jiang protects the gastric mucosa of the stomach lining. Gan Jiang is widely used in traditional medicines, both within herbal formulas and within dietary therapy. The health effects of this herb are widely [researched](#) (positive GI effects, cardiovascular, antimicrobial, etc.). Apart from some of the most obvious effects on digestion Gan Jiang also exhibits protective effects on the [liver](#), pain-relieving and anti-inflammatory effects, and also aids in preventing [blood clots](#).

Folium Artemisiae Argyi/ AiYe

Ai Ye, famously known as mugwort, has been burned traditionally over areas of the body such as the lower back to improve such systems as the [Hypothalamic-Pituitary](#) Adrenal

axis. Ai Ye contains [volatile oils](#) which transfer trans dermally. These oils are [antiviral](#), [antibacterial](#), and antifungal. These oils also inhibit [blood clotting](#) and increase secretion of bile, which can help you burn fat..

Tibetan salt is incredibly high in:

Tibetan black salt, also known as Ka Ru Cha has a unique place in these soaks. It first operates as a means of preserving the herbs and preventing them from spoiling. But it also sports an impressive mineral content, including a gaseous compound known as hydrogen sulfide (which gives the foot soaks their characteristic smell). Hydrogen sulfide, while a poisonous gas in large amounts, is actually produced by our kidneys and stimulates the [Klotho gene](#) which signals longevity.

- Potassium
- Calcium
- Iron
- Aluminum
- Titanium
- Manganese
- Barium Strontium
- Magnesium
- Copper
- Silicon
- Sulfur

Bringing Tradition & Science Together

The first thing to understand is how these herbs are affecting the body trans dermally by going into the skin. In high school biology, they taught us that nothing absorbed through the skin, which is incorrect. If there was any truth to this, then why does poison oak make you itch? Why do so many poisons travel through the skin and cause systemic effects on the body? The truth is that plants can affect us systemically via terpenes, alkaloids and volatile oils. These foot soaks work similar to an herbal poultice, however herbal patches and poultices are dependent on peripheral blood circulation. If not, much

blood is getting into the skin, then they don't work very well. It's important to not only place herbs against the skin, it's vital to increase circulation at the same time. Using a poultice or oil blend in a sauna can work very well. It introduces the skin to the botanical chemical while increasing blood circulations, which can be absorbed for sedentary people. Adding a poultice has a very limited use. They work very well for farmers in China who lead active lives and are almost in a constant state of sweating. In these cases, I've seen the poultice work incredibly well for local pain. In the United States, for people who may work on a computer or have a sedentary lifestyle, I see very minimal effects. By working with an herbal foot soak, you increase circulation, while at the same time, introduce the botanical chemicals through the skin into the bloodstream. The effects they have on us is quite extraordinary.

4 Stages to Soak Away Chronic Pain

Stage 1

Initially, you put your feet in the water. The water should be at a hot temperature but still safe for you to use. It can be a little tricky to do, but the heat itself will signal the body to dilate blood vessels. It allows all of the tissue in the area to become oxygenated. We think of the bodies as a snow globe, anything outside the cells will drain downward and it tends to drain down into the legs and feet. You can imagine it building up sediment and rotting there. The sediment causes oxidative damage to the body by way of an inflammatory reaction. All of these impurities make it back into the bloodstream and your body becomes aware of the damage which has just occurred. This signals macrophages which are white blood cells to go throughout your body eating away the dead tissue. Initially you put your feet in hot water, then blood circulation opens up in the feet and this has a mild tranquilizing effect. This initial vasodilation will also lower blood pressure, if you want a nice foot soak that's going to have a tranquilizing effect. If you need help getting to sleep, then you'll start with a foot soak and just allow the feet themselves to get warm, but you're going to stop before the heat travels throughout the whole body. For high blood pressure you want to do a shorter foot soak.

Stage 2

During the next stage, the heat will begin to rise up the legs. The first time you do a foot soak, the heat may only rise halfway up the shin. As the vasculature improves, you'll gradually be able to feel the heat past the knees and up through the hips to the lower back. This is where you get a lot of healing taking place, within the knees and the lumbar area. This is also where you get a lot of pain relief.

Stage 3

As the heat continues up toward the chest and heart, people will begin to feel an increase in heart rate. Doing a prolonged foot soak in a way that increases the heart rate is not ideal if people have high blood pressure. However, blood pressure is not a problem, allowing the heat to go up and cause the heart to beat faster can be a very good thing. It can really increase the energy of the body and activate that mitochondria and get that cardiovascular effect.

Stage 4

The final stage of the foot soak is when the heat will travel up through the head and cause the person to break a sweat. After you break a sweat that's a great time to dry off your head dry and feet, then bundle up and go about your day.

How the 4 Stages Relate to the 4 Seasons

Winter stage: Initially it draws Qi down as it opens up the blood circulation of the feet. This stage relates to winter just as a tree will have most of its nutrients in the root area during winter. The tree draws the SAP down into the core, into the roots. This represents winter.

Spring stage: Is the rising effect. If you think of shoots going up in spring, the active heat coming up through the legs is spring.

Summer stage: Is when the heart begins to really pump. This is similar to the way working outside in the summer heat would cause increased heart contractility.

Autumn stage: Is the final stage when they're sweating. This is the end of the cycle, as rising has given way to descending again. Generally during the autumn stage as people break a sweat, they'll get a feeling as though their lungs are open. This increased ability to breathe is often accompanied with pain relief.

Taking Care of Your Feet

- Feel for cold areas or blockages in the distribution. Relax feet to open them to allow the circulation to flow evenly. Enjoy this as an introspective meditation.
- Add hot water as you become accustomed to it raising the water temperature to around 110 degrees.
- After around 30 minutes you should break a sweat.
- Take your feet out while they are still hot. Dry your feet thoroughly.
- Allow the sweat to dry being careful to avoid drafts or wind exposure.
- Use daily for 3 months for arthritis
- Use for 3 weeks for hormone balance and digestive disorders. After symptoms alleviate, continue 1-2 times a week for maintenance and health optimization.
- Use daily or at least 3 times per week for fertility and drinking Xiao Yao San or Si Wu Tang tea; a typical course is 2 weeks to 3 months.

Caution using foot soaks with varicose veins:

Foot soaks can be very helpful for those with varicose veins, but be careful with the dose. Start with only 1 teabag and have the soak

done for shorter period of time at first (20 minutes); as the health and vasculature improve, the dose and soak time can be increased.

Foot soaks should NOT be used for:

- Pregnancy
- Metastatic cancer
- Active infection
- Diseases that are made worse by increasing circulation
- Recent surgery (wait at least 2 weeks)

Conclusion

Ultimately the only thing that is going to truthfully fix chronic pain is movement. As the heart contracts and blood circulation is increased, there's the feeling that your lungs are open and it becomes much easier to get around and walk start some yoga or tai chi. The foot soaks create a window of opportunity to help heal and restore the body and help people to go through longer periods of movement without pain or fatigue.

Giving Back to the Community

This entire project is being done by incredibly wonderful people who are working cooperatively with local Tibetan doctors and wild crafting herb gatherers. We are working hand in hand with local government in a way that helps to preserve these herb growing regions. With respect for the cultural and spiritual traditions of the regions all of our foot soaks have been blessed by a Buddhist priest.

You're helping the ecology of some very precious areas of the world. It's important to know that you're actually protecting the ecology of the region. You're helping to preserve the culture and traditions in that region. Today, so much use and consumption come at the expense of people in other areas and at the expense of the ecology of that region.

The wildcrafting is done responsibly. When we come across a bunch of Du Yi Wei, we may only take 20% of it and leave the rest to make sure that it's growing and thriving for the next year.