



Compendium of **Self-Care** and **Healing** **Tools**



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INTRODUCTION

As activists and women human rights defenders, we live and carry out our work in contexts of structural and patriarchal violence, which expose us to high levels of risk to our safety, well-being, and, at times, even our lives. This reality imposes an exhausting collective dynamic, heightened stress levels, and significant impacts on our physical, mental, emotional, energetic, and spiritual health.

Addressing and mitigating the impacts we face, managing and releasing emotions without suppressing them or harming ourselves, healing wounds, and preventing burnout are all essential to the holistic protection of women human rights defenders and activists. Both individually and collectively, we need to cultivate habits of care and self-care, as well as establish agreements within our organizations that allow us to feel supported, protected, heard, and well.

On top of these ongoing challenges, we are also navigating the complex reality of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are confident that by listening to our bodies and standing in solidarity, we can get through this together. With that in mind, we propose strengthening the following key areas:

Physical Well-being: Tuning into our bodies, paying attention to what we feel—including aches and discomfort—caring for our organs, recognizing symptoms, and responding to our needs. This includes proper nutrition, sleep, rest, medical care, and access to diverse healing therapies, among other practices.

Emotional Dimension: Attending to our feelings and emotions, and expressing them rather than allowing pain, anger, or sadness to accumulate, is a crucial aspect of the care that women defenders need. Emotions and feelings serve as powerful tools for our protection. It is essential to learn techniques to manage and release emotions when we experience despair, anxiety, sadness, or anger. This practice helps prevent emotions from becoming trapped in the body and manifesting as illness.

Energetic Dimension: Women defenders operate in highly challenging environments, which often lead to blockages in both personal and collective energy. We may, for instance, experience a sense of being “weighed down by negative energy,” feel “surrounded by an energy of death,” or develop an inexplicable sense of distrust. Healing and clearing these energy blockages can enhance our sense of hope, improve our work environment, and lighten the burdens we carry.

Mental Dimension: Patriarchal violence also affects our minds, shaping our thoughts in ways that hinder our well-being. Women defenders frequently struggle with persistent, distressing thoughts that deprive us of peace and obstruct our sense of self-worth, such as: “No matter how much I work, it is never enough,” “Nothing will ever change,” or “As a woman, I am not valuable.” These patterns lead to exhaustion, suffering, and harm that must be consciously addressed so we can gradually shift our perspectives, reclaim our power, and affirm our worth.

Spiritual Dimension: Recognizing the value of the practices, symbols, and rituals that women defenders engage in to feel connected to life, nature, and the transformative force of collective action is essential. Many Indigenous traditions hold a wealth of spiritual knowledge that can be reclaimed to strengthen our well-being and inspire our movements for justice.

The following set of tools is designed to help improve our well-being in these dimensions in simple and accessible ways. By practicing them with intention and consistency, we can achieve significant benefits.

This guide is yours! We invite you to explore it at your own pace, dedicating the time needed to engage with each suggested practice. Keep in mind that these are just a few among many existing tools for self-care, collective care, and healing.

You may know many more, so trust your wisdom and prioritize feelings of peace, well-being, and calm during these challenging times. Together, we will get through this!





Body Map: A Dialogue with my body¹



Purpose

This exercise aims to foster a deeper connection with the body's signals and cultivate awareness of the needs that must be addressed to enhance overall well-being. It seeks to promote greater self-awareness on physical, emotional, mental, and energetic levels.

Introduction

The human body is full of surprises—it generates and stores vital energy, and when it receives what it needs—care, attention, and kindness—it fosters sustained well-being. According to Chinese medicine and other non-Western perspectives, illness arises when energy becomes blocked or stagnant, preventing its natural flow. Our body constantly sends signals, guiding us toward what it needs to feel well and alerting us when essential needs remain unmet.

This exercise is an imaginative journey designed to facilitate a deep connection with oneself, allowing for an awareness of physical discomforts, emotions, thoughts, and strengths as they manifest in different parts of the body, internal organs, and overall mood.

It serves as a valuable self-diagnostic tool, helping individuals assess their physical, emotional, and mental state in the present moment and take proactive steps to enhance overall well-being.

Development

This exercise consists of three parts:

1. Connecting with your body through an imaginative journey
2. Self-diagnosis using a body map
3. Self-reflection and the opportunity to take action toward your well-being

1. Imaginary Journey:

In this section, you'll guide yourself through a journey to explore any aches, discomforts, strengths, and emotional states that are present in your body right now.

To begin, find a quiet and comfortable spot where you can lie on your back, preferably on a mat or soft surface without a pillow. Keep your feet and hands relaxed and at rest. Close your eyes and focus on your breathing, paying attention to the air entering and leaving your nostrils. Stay present with your breath and let it settle into its own natural rhythm. Feel how your breath starts to bring a sense of calm.

Now, in this peaceful state, slowly start to scan your body, beginning with your toes. Move up through the tops of your feet, your heels, and the soles. Tune into how they feel—heavy, swollen, light, sore, or maybe tingly. Be open to whatever sensations arise, whether it's pain, heat, or a sense of strength and grounding. What do you notice? Let your mind explore your feet for as long as you need.

Next, move up to your calves and repeat the process. Then focus on your knees. Take a moment to check in with them. Do they feel stiff or painful? Are they flexible and strong, or swollen? Remember, whatever comes up is important. Now, bring your attention to your thighs. As you continue, shift to your abdomen and imagine your reproductive organs, intestines, and bladder. Where do you feel the tension? What sensations do you notice? Move through this area and allow your organs to communicate with you. Check in with your hips, buttocks, and waist.

Feel your entire abdomen. How does it feel—bloated, light? Move through your internal organs, like your liver, stomach, and spleen. What emotions or feelings show up in your life right now? Do you feel anger, powerlessness, sadness, or maybe joy and well-being?

What else stands out to you?



Now, visualize your breasts. How do they feel? Do you notice any lumps or cysts? Take a moment to focus on your lungs—are you able to breathe deeply, or is your breath shallow? Move your attention to your heart and ask how it is. What feelings does it hold? Then, shift your focus to your throat and neck, and check in with any emotions or tension you may have stored there—unspoken anger or pain. Does your neck feel stiff, sore, or tight? Simply notice what you feel.

Now, direct your attention to your shoulders. Are they raised towards your ears, tense, or painful? Move down to your shoulder blades and back, and examine your spine. Travel along your entire spine from your lower back to your neck—do you feel any pain?

Finally, visualize your head and brain. Start at the back of your head, above the neck, and notice if you feel any heaviness, if your mind feels saturated, or if there is pain. Check in with your scalp. Now, move your focus to your face—trace along your forehead, eyes, eyebrows, ears, nose, and mouth. How does your face look? Is it calm or tense? How do your jaw muscles feel? Take note of all areas of your face.

When you're finished, you can return to focusing on your breath for a few moments. Feel how the air enters and exits,

and trust that this breathing exercise brings with it a quiet, deep sense of well-being. When you feel ready, gently open your eyes.

2. Self-Diagnosis: Your Body Map. *(You will need a sheet of paper and two colored markers)*

In this part of the exercise, the goal is to transfer what you visualized during your imaginary journey onto paper. To do this, you can draw a full-body outline on the sheet, both front and back (see image).

Within this outline, use a blue marker to indicate areas of well-being—those parts of your body that feel strong, vibrant, and healthy. Use a red marker to highlight areas where you experienced discomfort or pain.

You can also add key words in various areas. For instance, in the head, you may write “thoughts or ideas that torment me,” or include words that describe your emotional states, such as “I am sad.”

Try to express all the information that comes to mind within the silhouette, aiming to do so in as much detail as possible. It’s important not to suppress anything that arises. Once you have completed the silhouette, take a few minutes to look at it and reflect on how you feel about your creation.

It’s important that as you become aware of the vulnerable areas, you also recognize the parts of yourself that provide strength and well-being. In this reflective account, you may identify specific actions you can take to enhance your well-being.

This exercise can be done alone, or you can engage in a dialogue with someone you trust. It can be especially enriching when shared with others.

3. Self-reflection and the opportunity to act towards your well-being

In this part, the goal is to write about your experience with the exercise. There are many ways to approach this reflection; it could be a letter addressed to yourself or a close friend where you share the insights you gained, where you notice your strengths, which areas are vulnerable and in need of care and attention, and what emotions surfaced.

Conclusion of the Exercise

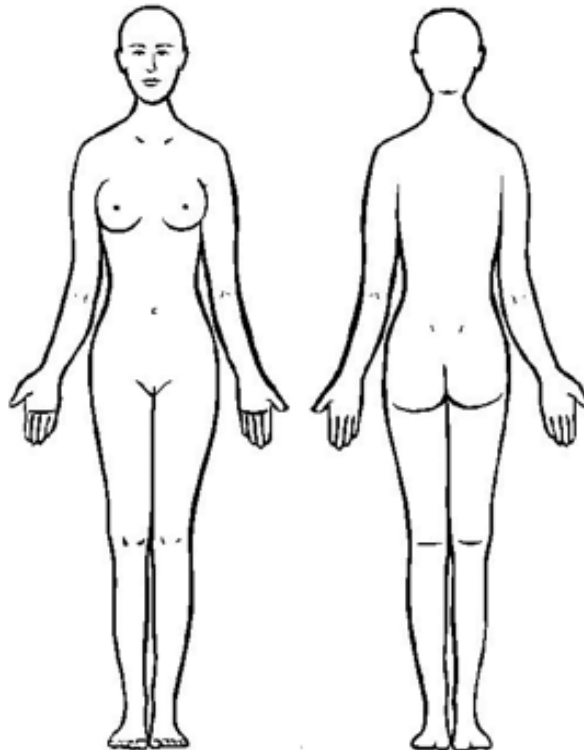
The daily demands and numerous responsibilities that women face often lead to high levels of stress, which frequently persist



and prevent us from connecting with the signals and needs our bodies are expressing. It is common to become accustomed to living with pain, discomfort, repressed emotions, or moods (such as sadness or anger) that become chronic, diminishing our overall well-being.

To promote our care and well-being, it is essential to reconnect with our organic wisdom— that inner voice that knows exactly what we need to achieve balance and well-being. This voice manifests in various ways: when we feel the urge to rest, to dance, to laugh, when we experience hunger, fatigue, and so on. However, when we fail to listen, it can manifest through discomfort, pain, or illness.

Exercising our inner listening is a powerful tool for enhancing our well-being. Being aware of our needs and attending to them in a timely manner is a practice that will allow us to experience greater overall well-being.





The relationship of organs to emotions in traditional Chinese medicine²



Introduction

The contexts and defenses experienced by activists and defenders bring their stories to the forefront, particularly the physical body— a body that holds symptoms, untold stories, or those rarely shared by words. This body has become accustomed to living with various discomforts, pains, and emotions arising from moments of stress, tension, fear, and anger, all of which hinder us from feeling total freedom and well-being.

Illuminating the close relationship between each organ and its associated emotions provides us with a spectrum of sensations such as heat, cold, acidity, and/or burning. These sensations are not only connected to what we feel but also to the thoughts embedded deep within our being. Our cells, muscle fibers, bones, etc., send us messages of attention, urging us to care for our lives with awareness.

This text offers an introduction to a principle of Chinese Medicine, where each organ houses an emotion— a relationship rooted in the experiences, whether positive or negative, that our body reacts to and holds onto over time. It serves as an invitation to reflect, to name our own experiences, and from there, to collectively build pathways for care and healing.

The Liver

The liver is the powerful strategist that organizes the body's activities, stores and preserves blood, allows the body to adapt to extreme climate changes, breaks down, stores, and rebuilds matter, and controls muscles and tendons. When muscular activity is intense, the liver releases some of the stored blood to the muscles.

The functions of the liver send us a message: when we face setbacks, difficulties, and feel overwhelmed or frustrated by our inability to reconstruct or set limits, it reflects this internal struggle.

Unexpressed or long-held anger and frustration tend to accumulate in the liver, leading to inflammation, excessive heat, and congestion. Caring for the liver involves cooling this internal heat, recognizing that one does not always have to be right, and understanding that not everything is the fault of others. The key lies in turning inward with kindness and accepting what is.

The liver communicates distress through various signals, including skin reactions such as redness or dark spots on the face, a persistent bitter taste in the mouth unrelated to food, frequent muscle cramps, blurred vision, and thin, dry, or brittle nails.

Water restores the liver's freshness and fluidity, helping to release stored anger. Fresh green foods support its purification and nourish its cells, while refined flours and fats should be avoided when symptoms are pronounced.

The Kidneys

The kidneys play a crucial role in regulating the body's fluids, preserving essential life force, and facilitating the transformation of energy and vital substances necessary for bodily functions.

Have you ever experienced a burning sensation while urinating? This discomfort may be a sign of kidney dehydration, much like how raisins shrink when they lose moisture. Dehydration can result from insufficient water intake, prolonged time in environments where access to restrooms is limited, or simply being so preoccupied with responsibilities that drinking a glass of water slips your mind. Additionally, fear—perhaps of retaliation for carrying out work that you know to be legitimate and just, even if it challenges dominant powers—can also impact kidney function.

Cortisol, released in response to stress, provides the necessary energy to protect life, enabling us to fight or react to challenges. However, when stress and heightened vigilance become chronic, the kidneys' vital energy begins to deplete. Fear and sudden



fright serve as survival alerts, prompting us to adapt, create new solutions, or seek support. Yet, when fear immobilizes us, reducing us to a state of terror, it diminishes our life force, affecting the bone marrow and certain brain functions.

Acknowledging fear, naming it, and accepting our vulnerability to external circumstances is essential. Doing so does not equate to inaction; rather, it fosters awareness and a compassionate alertness that guides us toward decisions and actions centered on self-care and well-being.

The Lungs

These vital organs work tirelessly, regulating and distributing energy through each breath—every inhalation and exhalation. They expel impurities from the body, govern the skin and pores, and manifest in the health of the nose. The lungs carry the breath of life to every corner of the body and are intrinsically linked to communication and speech.

The lungs also speak to us of emotions that have remained unacknowledged, emotions we have yet to confront. How many times have you had a cold this year? Perhaps a vitamin C-rich juice could help strengthen your immune system—but have you also considered how often you have allowed yourself the time and space to cry? Sadness often arises when we have not fully processed the losses we face daily, particularly as women defenders: a missing colleague, a community river on the brink of drying up, the loss of a dear friend in the struggle, or the feeling of being unheard. The patriarchal system has conditioned us to believe that crying is a sign of weakness, that showing our sadness makes us vulnerable.

Yet, if we do not take the time to acknowledge, speak about, or grieve our experiences, the lungs remind us that what does not flow through tears may manifest as nasal congestion, sinus infections, or hoarseness. And if we continue to ignore these signs, sadness may deepen, and melancholy may settle in, becoming a silent companion in our nights and moments of solitude.

Breathing deeply, meditating, allowing ourselves to fully experience and process grief, and giving it the space it requires can help restore balance. Seeking out friends to share what weighs heavily on our hearts creates an opening, allowing the lungs to release what has been holding us in tension, fostering both relief and strength.

The Skin

As the body's largest organ, the skin varies in tone and thickness, regulating internal and external heat while allowing us to experience different textures and temperatures. It serves as a protective barrier, facilitates close contact with others, and conveys sensations such as warmth, pleasure, and alertness.

Conditions like allergies, dermatitis, psoriasis, and hives signal how we are managing stress—particularly the belief that we must handle everything on our own, refusing to admit, “I cannot do this alone.” Instead, we continue to overextend ourselves in an effort to meet expectations. The external world itself can provoke allergic reactions, redness, or itching when we struggle to accept it—when it pains us, frustrates us, or saddens us. The specific location of these manifestations on the body offers insight into what we may need to examine within ourselves. Years ago, a friend searching for her place, power, and identity felt overwhelmed by her circumstances, though she was not yet fully aware of this. She began to develop painful, oozing sores on her leg. After consulting numerous dermatologists and trying various treatments, her condition only began to heal when she set firm boundaries with the person and situation that were weighing on her. The thighs, after all, symbolize strength, stability, and sensuality.

The skin is our first shield, mediating our relationship with the external world and reflecting our internal struggles.



The Joints

Bones are the great ancestors of our bodies, formed from the fundamental elements that gave rise to life itself. They provide structure, supporting the entire skeletal system—strong yet light, resilient but not necessarily rigid.

Long bones require joints to connect them, along with smaller bones that facilitate movement, allowing us to advance, lift, and bend. Every joint plays a crucial role, yet among women defenders, the most affected are often the knees and hips. How many of them have experienced knee pain? While it may stem from excess weight or a sedentary lifestyle, the reasons often run deeper than a mere lack of physical activity. Fear can shape our movement—public spaces may feel unsafe after experiencing violence, and the emotional burden of collective struggles, grief, and anger can make every step feel heavier. The knees absorb this strain; we instinctively stiffen them, stretching ligaments too tightly, tensing muscles, and locking the patella in place. Control manifests in the body—resistance to movement, fear of taking a step forward, hesitation in making decisions, an aversion to losing control. Yet, for any forward motion, flexibility is essential.

The same holds true for the hips, a region that cradles sensuality, rhythm, and self-sufficiency. Patriarchy has long restricted the freedom to move with joy, pleasure, and autonomy, stifling our ability to walk with confidence and ease. What should be a fluid, natural movement has become stiff and constrained. Gently awakening the hips—through circular motions, through dance that reconnects us with joy and erotic expression—can help restore balance. The hips have been among the most repressed parts of the body, bearing the weight of inherited cultural restrictions. Releasing their rigidity is part of reclaiming our liberation.



The Uterus

The uterus is a second heart, pulsing with the emotions that surround us. Have you ever felt it contract when someone follows too closely behind you? Or experienced debilitating cramps after an intense argument, leaving you curled up in bed? The uterus registers surges of adrenaline, frustration, and anger, yet it is also our first connection to femininity. However, this is not the romanticized femininity we were taught as children—the notion that girls must be gentle, quiet, and compliant, or that a feminine woman is one who dresses and presents herself to please others. Instead, the femininity we speak of is the innate power to generate life—not merely in the reproductive sense imposed upon us, but in the broader capacity to bring forth projects, dreams, and ideas.

This organ is also intimately linked to pleasure, to joy in its purest form. Yet how often have we struggled to access that pleasure? Experiences of abuse, or relationships centered on others' desires rather than our own, can suppress not only the sensation itself but also the belief that we have a right to experience it. Over time, we may shut ourselves off to avoid pain. The uterus remembers and signals this repression—through fibroids, excessive bleeding, dark clotted blood, or even the disappearance of menstruation for months, sometimes years.

Tuning into the uterus allows us to reclaim the power of creation and move beyond an over-identification with masculine traits—patterns of thinking and behavior we have adopted to survive in a patriarchal world. It invites us to listen to other women, to recognize the strength found in intuition and softness, and to align ourselves with life's natural cycles. In doing so, we plant the seeds of transformation together.



Tools for managing emotions³

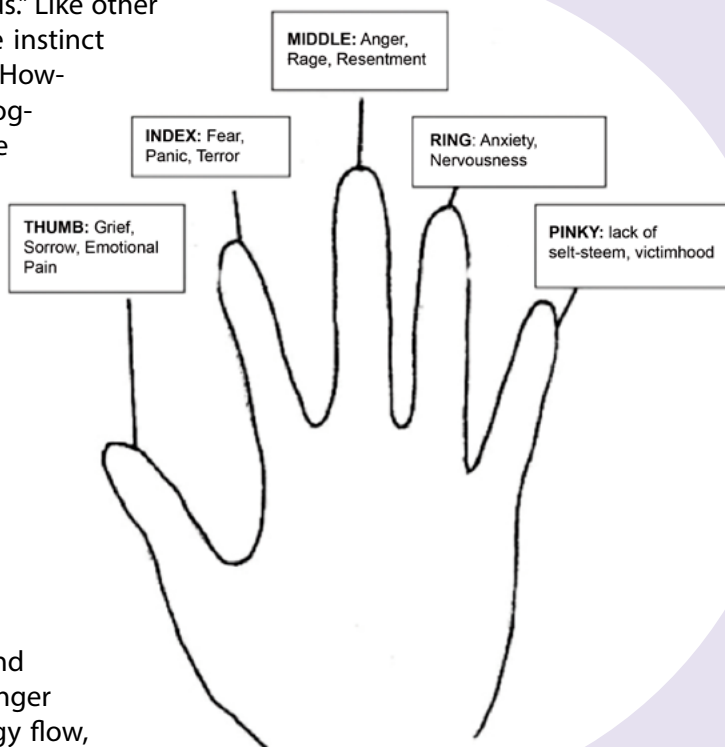


Fingers as a Release for Intense Emotions⁴

One of the effects of traumatic stress is the experience of intense emotions. During the “fight-or-flight” response triggered by danger or crisis, emotions and sensations—such as fear, anger, rage, and anxiety—reverberate throughout the entire body. Emotions can be understood as waves of energy flowing through the mind-body-spirit connection. As Daniel Goleman (1994) explains in *Emotional Intelligence*, emotions are “impulses to act, instant plans for handling life that evolution has embedded in us.” Like other animals, humans possess the instinct to react to various situations. However, due to our advanced cognitive abilities, we also have the capacity to suppress or deny our emotions. When this happens, the energy of these emotions remains stored within the body-mind-spirit system, often manifesting as physical symptoms such as migraines, digestive issues, jaw tension, or tight shoulders, as well as behavioral patterns like passive-aggressiveness.

The underlying theory behind this practice is that each finger serves as a channel for energy flow, connected to different organs in the body. By gently holding each finger, one can release and balance this energy.

Typically, within one to two minutes of holding a finger, a pulsing sensation or heartbeat-like rhythm may be felt, indicating that energy is moving and stabilizing. As a result, the intensity of the emotion begins to subside. Many people instinctively grasp



their fingers in certain situations without consciously realizing it. We invite you to observe how you naturally hold your fingers and hands in different emotional states and how this correlates with your internal experiences.

By engaging the hands, we can release blocked emotions. Emotions move through the body like waves, and when we attempt to suppress or control them, they become trapped within us. To relieve these emotions, one simply needs to hold the corresponding finger associated with a specific emotional state.

Instructions

When experiencing an intense emotion, wrap one hand around the corresponding finger of the other hand and hold it for 2–5 minutes until the intensity of the emotion decreases. Each finger is associated with a particular emotional energy, as outlined below:



1. Thumb: Grief, Sorrow, and Emotional Pain. Holding the thumb does not suppress tears or emotional pain but rather facilitates the movement of energy, allowing the individual to regain a sense of calm. Gently grasp the thumb, take deep breaths, and exhale the sorrow and grief you are experiencing. Continue holding the thumb until you feel a subtle pulsation of energy, indicating the release of emotional tension.

2. Index Finger: Fear and Decision-Making. Fear serves as an internal guide, offering valuable insight into our environment, physical well-being, and personal growth. What matters is how we respond to fear. Instead of becoming paralyzed by it, hold the index finger to cultivate clarity and make an informed decision—whether to retreat, remain, or take action. For those experiencing chronic fear due to traumatic stress, the body-mind-spirit system may remain in a constant state of panic. Engaging with the index finger can help develop a more constructive relationship with fear, transforming it from an overwhelming force into a manageable guide. While holding the finger, exhale to release fear and inhale courage and inner strength.

3. Middle Finger: Anger and Rage. Anger is a natural and valid emotional response in many situations. However, when left unchecked, rage can lead to violence—either directed at others or turned inward. Practicing nonviolence requires recognizing injustice and anger while consciously choosing to respond with justice and peace. Suppressed anger or a refusal to acknowledge deep-seated rage can manifest in passive-aggressive behaviors or contribute to physical ailments such as arthritis, ulcers, migraines, and muscular tension. To channel anger constructively, hold the middle finger, exhale to release fury and resentment, and inhale compassion, vitality, and creative energy.

4. Ring Finger: Anxiety and Nervousness. Many people instinctively fidget with their ring finger when experiencing distress, as it provides a subconscious means of managing mental restlessness. Holding the ring finger can help release unnecessary anxiety and redirect energy toward purposeful action. To ease nervousness, grasp the ring finger, take deep breaths, and exhale worries and tension. Inhale with a deep sense of peace and security, trusting in the presence of spiritual support and protection amid life's challenges.



5. Pinky Finger: Self-Esteem and Overcoming Victimhood. The pinky finger serves to address feelings of low self-worth or being a victim of circumstances. Grasping the pinky provides a means of counteracting feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. To stop identifying as a victim, it is crucial to first acknowledge the benefits one may unconsciously seek when feeling this way—such as attention, sympathy, or the concern of others. Shifting into a state of empowerment and self-esteem brings numerous rewards and fosters a genuine sense of appreciation in the eyes of others. Hold the pinky, take a deep breath, exhale, and release feelings of insecurity and low self-worth. Inhale while expressing gratitude and appreciation for the gift of life.

Supporting the Body for Trauma and Anxiety⁵

This technique provides peace and tranquility to individuals experiencing distress, anxiety, fear, sadness, discouragement, and other emotions as a result of trauma. It creates a direct connection with the energy of the affected person, so it is essential to remain centered, calm, and fully aware that the goal is to share love, peace, harmony, and tranquility with the individual being assisted.

It is important to take a few moments of silence before beginning the process, especially to protect oneself and send an abundance of light and love to the person in need. With each part of the body you touch, breathe deeply while imagining the flow of light and energy moving through the body, mind, and spirit, relaxing the individual and sending messages of love, harmony, strength, and peace.

Instructions

1. Gently hold the forehead and base of the skull, placing your hands without direct contact with the head. Hold for 3 to 5 minutes.
2. Hold the crown of the head with the tips of your fingers on the forehead. Hold for 3 to 5 minutes.
3. Hold the shoulders. Hold for 3 to 5 minutes.
4. Hold the area above the sternum (chest) and behind the heart (back). Hold for 3 to 5 minutes.



5. Visualize the energy of the sky filling your chest. Continue for several minutes, allowing yourself to feel the warmth of the energy.
6. Take deep breaths, filling your body with light and sensation.

Draining Pain

1. Place your left hand over your chest and direct your right hand toward Mother Earth.
2. Breathe deeply and imagine the pain entering through your left hand and flowing out through your right hand, into the Earth.
3. Continue for several minutes and notice a reduction in pain in the affected area.
4. Switch hands. Raise your left hand toward the sky and imagine the energy and light of the heavens entering through your hand. Then, place your hand over your chest.





5. Imagine the energy of heaven filling your chest. Do this for several minutes and feel the warmth of the energy.
6. Breathe deeply, filling your body with light and sensation.

“Switching” the Energy Field – Techniques for Centering and Restoring Energy Flow⁶

“Switching” is a highly effective exercise for promoting calmness and centering. It can be used before meditation to enhance focus, to alleviate depression or anxiety, and to sharpen mental and spiritual concentration. When working with individuals or groups, this practice can help soothe someone before a therapy session or refocus children’s or students’ energy after a break, before an exam, or at the start of a lesson. We invite you to follow these simple steps to incorporate this technique into your routine:

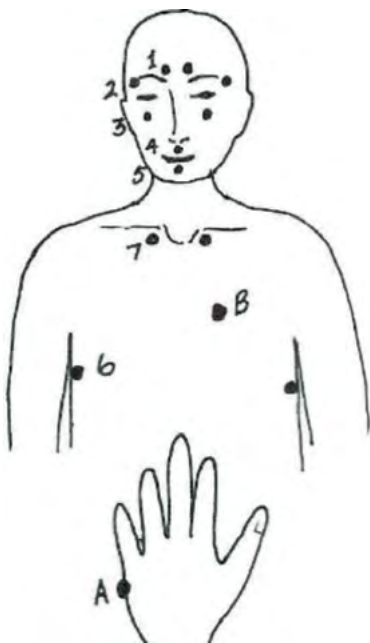
- Sit comfortably and take a deep breath.
- Cross your left ankle over your right ankle.
- Extend your hands forward, rotating them so that your thumbs point toward the ground.
- Cross your right hand over your left hand and interlace your fingers, forming a fist.
- Gently place your clasped hands against the center of your sternum.
- Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and allow your entire body to relax. Imagine descending into a place at the center of your being. (You may visualize a point below your navel, at the center of your abdomen. In Chinese tradition, this is known as the Dan-tian; in Indian tradition, it is called the Hara.)
- Relax your tongue inside your mouth and gently place the tip of your tongue against the area just behind your upper teeth.
- Take deep breaths, letting go of all thoughts. Rest in a state of deep peace and silence for a few minutes.

- After two or three minutes, relax your hands onto your legs. Take a deep breath and slowly open your eyes.
- Stretch your hands and arms. Gently tap your fingertips on your head to awaken your mind and refresh your energy.

Emotional Freedom Technique – EFT⁷

Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) were developed by Gary Craig and Gary Flint. These methods are highly effective in releasing and healing intense emotions, fears, anxiety, emotional pain, anger, traumatic memories, phobias, and addictions. Additionally, they can help alleviate physical symptoms such as headaches and bodily pain.

This technique is based on the theory of the body's energy field, integrating concepts from mind-body-spirit practices and traditional Eastern medicine's meridian theory. Emotional distress, trauma, anxiety, and pain can create blockages in the body's energy flow. By applying gentle tapping or acupressure on specific points connected to energy meridians, EFT helps release stagnant energy, restoring a balanced and healthy flow throughout the body and mind.



Practicing the Energy Release Technique

1. Identify a Problem to Assess Your Anxiety Level:

Choose a specific issue to work on, such as a concern, a phobia, anxiety, a traumatic memory, or a persistent negative thought. Using a scale from 0 to 10, evaluate the level of anxiety you experience when thinking about this issue (0 = no anxiety, 10 = maximum anxiety). If using a numerical scale feels difficult, consider a simpler approach, such as cat-



egorizing your anxiety as none, low, moderate, or high, or using a comparative scale like minimal to extreme or highest to lowest levels of distress.

2. Gently tap 7 to 9 times on the acupressure points listed below while taking deep breaths. Use your **index and middle fingers** to apply light taps to the following areas:

1. The points at the **inner edges of the eyebrows** (where they begin).
2. The points at the **outer edges of the eyebrows** (where they end).
3. The points on the **cheekbones, directly below the pupils.**
4. The point **below the nose.**
5. The point on the **chin, just below the lower lip.**
6. The points **approximately 10 cm (4 inches) below the armpits.**
7. The points **below the collarbones, near the sternum.**



3. Tap Point A (located on the side of the hand) and repeat the following affirmation three times: *"Even though I have this problem, I am okay, and I accept myself."*

4. Repeat the tapping sequence (outlined in Steps 2 and 3) until your anxiety level decreases to 0–2 on the scale.

5. Gently massage the "tender point" (Point B): Apply a light massage or gentle pressure to the sensitive area on the left side of the chest, approximately 5 cm (2 inches) below the left collarbone and 4–5 cm (1.5–2 inches) from the sternum. This helps further release tension and restore energy balance.



Specialized Polarity Movements⁷

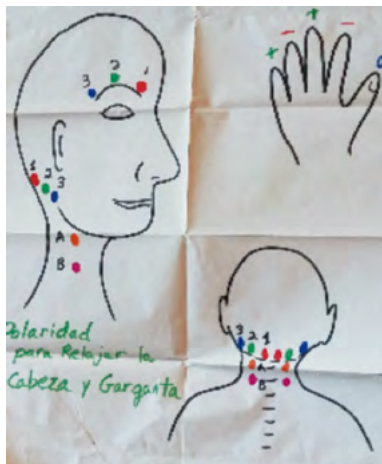
The following movements can be performed individually or incorporated into a **General Polarity Session**. These techniques are particularly effective for addressing traumatic stress, which often manifests as **blocked energy in the head and neck area**.

Head Energy Points

Neck Energy Points

Purpose: To relieve neck pain, congestion, stiffness, and blockages in the throat.

Movement: The person is lying on their back or sitting in a chair. Working from behind, imagine four points along the front-left side of the neck, aligned from beneath the jaw to the base of the neck. On the diagonal right side of the neck, imagine another set of four points aligned from the base of the skull to the base of the neck. Use your index finger (air, -) to contact the front points and your middle finger (fire, +) to contact the back points. Start



at the base of the neck and work your way upwards, holding each point and imagining energy flowing diagonally through the neck. Touch the side of the neck very gently to avoid discomfort. Finish the movement by supporting the neck.

Jaw Tapping

Purpose: To relieve tension in the jaw, throat, and face.

Movement: The person is lying on their back or seated in a chair. You will be working from behind the person's head. Place your fingers on both sides of the face and locate the jawbone. Gently tap with the fingertips on the muscles and cheeks around both jaw joints for 1-3 minutes. This movement can also be performed on oneself to release tension in the jaw.





Tools for Energy Management: Chakras⁹



Chakras are centers in the body that receive, assimilate, and transmit vital energetic force. The Sanskrit word “chakra,” originating from Indian culture, means a wheel of energy. Chakras coordinate the communication network between the body, mind, and spirit. Each chakra center expresses a distinct level and quality of energy, which is reflected in one’s attitudes, actions, and emotions. While the seven-chakra system comes from Indian tradition, Carolin Myss, in her book *Anatomy of the Spirit*, makes a comparison between the chakras and the seven sacraments of Christianity as well as the Kabbalistic Tree of Life in Judaism. Myss views the chakra system as an archetype of human maturation in seven stages. “Each chakra represents a spiritual life lesson or challenge common to all humans. By working with each chakra, individuals gain power and self-awareness, integrating this into their spirit and advancing on the path to greater consciousness.” Chakras can be seen as a map of the soul’s journey. For those healing from traumatic stress, the chakra map can offer direction in the recovery process. Suffering and physical, mental, and emotional collapse can often be linked to chakras and the release of energy. Working with the chakras and their energy is a direct way to address the healing and transformation process.

Each chakra is associated with: a specific gland, organ, or part of the body; a particular vibration of sound or color; a mental, emotional, or spiritual capacity; and a vital spiritual lesson and power. Physical and emotional dysfunctions, as well as illness in organs, glands, and other parts of the body, are caused by imbalances or blockages in the energy of a chakra. Blockages slow down or cut off the vital energetic force that normally flows through the body, resulting in problems in the body, mind, and spirit. Daily work with the chakras is essential to maintaining balanced and flowing energy.


Chakras can be considered from the perspective of the energy that enters our body-mind-spirit, as well as from the energy we give to others and our environment. Our family, society, and physical surroundings directly influence the flow of energy entering our chakra system. There may be an abundance or scarcity

of energy exchanged through the chakras. At times, our chakra energy system can become so intertwined with that of another person that we feel chained or bound to them. In some families, cultures, or countries, an entire society can become trapped or blocked in one or more chakras. For example, in a place characterized by extreme poverty and despair, society may be stuck in the first chakra, the center of safety. A family or society that permits the sexual abuse of women and children may be blocked in the second chakra, the center of sexuality. And so on. Chakras are a broad subject, so in order to develop material for effective group work, this book employs a spiral approach, providing:

- An overview of the chakras and information about each chakra
- A visualization—Journey through the chakras
- Self-help methods for balancing chakra energy

Chakra Theory

You don't need to know everything about the chakras to start working with their energy. Whether or not we're aware of them, the healthy flow of energy keeps the system in balance. However, we can unlock even greater benefits and growth when we consciously address the issues and blockages associated with each chakra. Below is a brief overview of the seven chakras, followed by a detailed chart on the next two pages.



First Chakra – The Root – is all about security and stability, located at the base of the spine just below the pubic bone. It's linked to the color red and governs our survival instincts.

Second Chakra – The Sacral – is the center of sexuality and emotional desire, found two to three inches below the navel. It's associated with the color orange, the spleen, and the sexual organs, driving sexual energy.

Third Chakra – The Solar Plexus – is the seat of personal power, located at the base of the sternum. It's connected with the color yellow and the adrenal glands. This chakra influences our sense of personal power, anger, and how we express ourselves in the world.

Fourth Chakra – The Heart – is the center of compassionate love, associated with green for healing and pink for compassion. It connects with the circulatory system and the emotion of love.

Fifth Chakra – The Throat – is the communication hub, located at the base of the neck between the collarbones. Blue represents this chakra, and it's connected to the thyroid. It governs higher consciousness and the ability to express ourselves clearly.

Sixth Chakra – The Third Eye – is the center of intuition, found between the eyes and behind the forehead. It's linked with the color indigo (deep blue-purple) and the pituitary gland. It's all about intuition, perception, and tapping into our deeper knowing.

Seventh Chakra – The Crown – sits at the top of the head. This chakra governs spirituality and is associated with the colors lilac or iridescent white, and the pineal gland. It connects us to the larger cosmic order and the universal self.



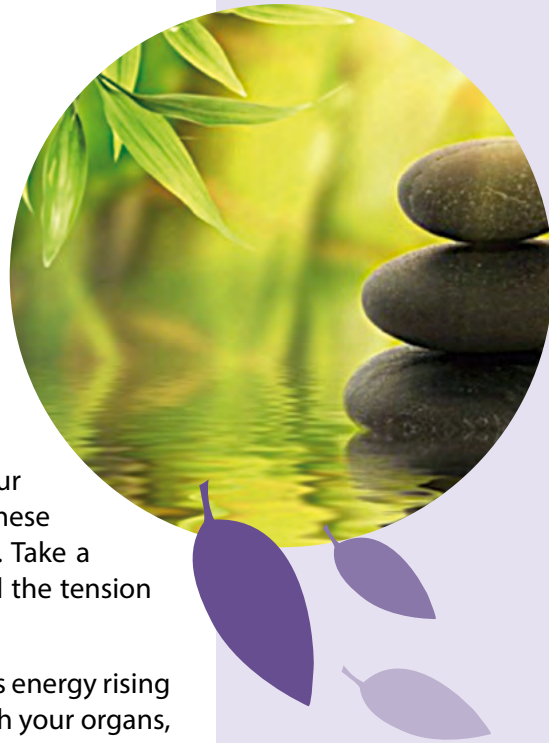
VISUALIZATION – A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CHAKRAS

Part 1 – Body Scan *(with soft music)*

Get comfortable, either sitting or lying down. Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Let go of the day's worries and focus on being fully present in the moment. Feel your connection to the earth beneath you. Imagine the earth's energy flowing up through your feet and filling your entire body. Start by connecting with your feet, legs, and thighs. Gently tighten and stretch these areas to notice any tension that might be there. Take a deep breath, exhale, and release, letting go of all the tension in your feet and legs.

Take another deep breath and visualize the earth's energy rising up through your pelvis and torso, moving through your organs, genitals, abdomen, stomach, and chest, flowing up your back and spine, all the way to your shoulders. Tune in to these areas and notice any areas of tension. Gently tighten and stretch your back and shoulders. Take another deep breath and as you exhale, fully release, letting go of tension in your organs, abdomen (feeling deeply relaxed), stomach, chest (feeling completely relaxed), back, spine, and shoulders (feeling soft and relaxed). Allow yourself to feel a profound sense of peace and tranquility throughout your entire being.

Take another deep breath, imagining the earth's energy flowing up into your arms, elbows, forearms, hands, and fingers. Gently tighten and stretch these areas of your body to notice any tension. Take a deep breath, and as you exhale, fully release, letting go of any tension in your arms, hands, and fingers. Breathe deeply as you connect with any tension you may feel in your neck or head. Open your mouth in a wide yawn, stretching your tongue and jaw. Make a face, tightening all the muscles in your cheeks, forehead, and around your eyes. Breathe deeply again,



and as you exhale, release all the tension in your neck (feeling soft and relaxed), tongue, jaw, and cheeks (very relaxed), forehead, eyes, ears, and scalp (soft and relaxed). You feel a deep sense of peace within yourself.

Now, scan your body once more. If there's any area where you still feel even the slightest tension, return to that part and gently contract it, increasing the tension. Take a deep breath, and as you exhale, completely release. You feel profound peace throughout every part of your body

Part 2 – Journey Through the Chakras

Now, imagine embarking on a journey to visit each of the chakras, the centers where your energy and personal powers reside. Each chakra holds essential lessons to learn, heal, and transform as you grow and evolve on the journey of life.

- We will begin by visiting the **First Chakra**, the Root, the center of security, located at the base of your spine, just below the pubic bone. You can envision the location of the chakra or place your hand over it to connect with its energy. This is your center of connection to the earth, home, family, well-being, stability, and sense of safety. The color or vibrational energy associated with the Root Chakra is red, and the element is earth. The message of this chakra is "I am!" Take a few moments with this chakra now. If any painful memories or feelings arise, or if something needs healing, breathe deeply to release this blocked energy. Ground yourself in the security of the earth element and the color red. Spend a moment with this chakra, knowing you can return here to continue the healing process. When you feel ready, leave this chakra and continue your journey upwards to the Second Chakra.

- **The Second Chakra** is the center of sexuality and creativity. It's located about an inch below your navel, in your abdomen. You may want to rest your hands on this chakra to feel the energy there. This is your emotional center—your feelings, desires,



sensuality, and sexuality; your ability to connect with others and to love and be loved. It's the place of fluid movement and playfulness. The color of the Second Chakra is orange, like ripe fruit, such as a mango. The element here is water, and the message is: "I desire, I want, I feel." Take a moment with this chakra to connect with any memories or feelings that may need healing. Breathe deeply to release any blocked energy, grounding yourself in the security of water, the healing element, and the color orange. After a few moments, leave this chakra, knowing you can always return to continue the healing process. When you're ready, move on to the Third Chakra.

• **The Third Chakra**, the power center, is located at the base of the sternum where it connects with the rib cage. You may want to rest your hands on this chakra to feel its energy. This is your personal power—your ability to act, to do, to enjoy life, to lead, or to control. It's the center of transformation, where you can face life and say "yes" or "no." It's also your center for aggression and humor. The color of this chakra is bright yellow, like the sun. The element is fire, and the message is: "I act." Take a moment with this chakra, connecting to any memories or feelings that might need healing—times when you've misused your power or given it away. Breathe deeply to release any blocked energy, grounding yourself in the energy of fire and the color yellow. Embrace your strength and power as you connect with your true self. After a moment, leave this chakra, knowing you can always return to continue the healing process. When you're ready, continue your journey towards the Fourth Chakra.

• **The Fourth Chakra**, the heart center, is located in the torso, between the pectorals. This is your center of compassion and unconditional love, the core of balance in your relationships and friendships with others. It represents your ability to accept and love yourself as you are, as well as to accept and love others for who they are. This is the center of the Christ Consciousness, of Kwan Yin, the Chinese goddess of compassion. You may wish to place your hand on this chakra, nurturing and embracing your heart. The color here is green, like nature, for healing; or pink, the color of love. The element is air, and the message is: "I love; I love



with unconditional compassion."Take a moment with the heart center, connecting with any memories or wounds from the past that may need healing—times when you didn't love yourself or others enough. Breathe deeply to release any blocked energy, inhaling the element of air. Let the color green shine to heal any wounds in your heart, and the color pink to embrace yourself with compassion as you are. Embrace the goddess of your heart and the wisdom you have gained on your life journey. Take another moment with this chakra, knowing you can always return here to continue the healing process. When you're ready, leave this chakra behind and continue your journey upward toward the Fifth Chakra.

• **The Fifth Chakra**, the Throat, is the center of communication, located at the base of the neck, between the collarbones. This is your center for speaking the truth of your mind and heart, for expressing your ideas and emotions, and for creative self-expression. You may wish to touch your throat chakra to feel the vibration of your voice and your power to communicate. The color here is blue, like the sky. The element is sound. The message is: "I can create with my words. I can express my heart."



Take a moment with the throat chakra, reflecting on any memories or feelings that may need healing—times when your voice or your truth was stifled; moments when you misused your ability to communicate; times when you closed your eyes and failed to hear the truth within yourself or others. Breathe deeply to release any blocked energy in your throat or ears. Feel the vibration of sound moving through you. Let the color blue shine to heal your communication center. Embrace your unique voice and the true self that you are. Spend another moment with

this chakra, knowing you can always return here to continue the healing process. When you're ready, move on from this chakra and continue your journey upward toward the Sixth Chakra.

- **The Sixth Chakra**, the Third Eye, is located between the eyebrows, behind your forehead. This is the center of intuition, vision, dreams, imagination, visualization, and wisdom. It is the eye of the mind, capable of knowing and perceiving the depths of experience. The color associated with this chakra is indigo, a deep blue-purple hue. The element here is light. The message: "I see." You may wish to gently touch and marvel at your Third Eye to sense the energy there. Take a moment with your center of intuition, connecting with any memories that may need healing—times when you turned away from your dreams or suppressed your intuition. Breathe deeply to move and release any blocked energy in your Third Eye. Feel the element of light flowing through this center, illuminating any blindness or doubt. Let the indigo color shine to heal and bring clarity to your world. Take one more moment with this chakra, knowing you can always return here to continue the healing process. When you're ready, leave this chakra behind and continue your journey upward toward the Seventh Chakra.

- **The Seventh Chakra**, the Crown, is located at the top of the head, or slightly above it. This is your spiritual center, your connection to the Sacred, to the Source. Place your hand on your crown and feel the energies of the heavens flowing into this chakra. This is your center of connection to the divine; the center of the soul; the center of higher consciousness and eternal wisdom; the center of the wise self, with the sap of life united with All. Here, the color is violet or iridescent white. The element is vibration, the divine will; the message is "I am a part of All, and All is One."

- Take a moment now with your **Crown Chakra**, connecting with any memories that may need healing—times when you strayed from Spirit or denied your spiritual nature. Breathe deeply to release any blocked energy in your Crown Chakra, feeling the vibration of divine will flowing through this center. Let the violet



color shine to heal your center of spirituality. Accept the sacredness of your being, and feel yourself as part of and interconnected with All of Being. Take one more moment with this chakra, knowing that you can always return here to continue the healing process. When you're ready, leave this chakra and move to a safe and sacred place, perhaps the garden with your soul. Rest there for a moment, feeling rooted and connected to the earth.

Breathe deeply and feel a profound sense of peace as a result of your journey through the chakras. Sense the clear and balanced energy, and the vibrant colors flowing through each of your chakras:

- Red flowing through your First Chakra, the Root Chakra, providing a sense of security and stability.
- Orange flowing through your Second Chakra, opening you to creativity and sexuality.
- Yellow radiating from your Solar Plexus, illuminating your true sense of power and will.
- Green flowing through your Heart Chakra, healing wounds from the past, while pink shines from your heart, allowing you to love others and yourself with deep compassion.
- The blue energy flows through your Throat Chakra, opening your voice to speak and your ears to listen.
- The indigo light shines from your Third Eye, connecting you with your vision, dreams, and intuition.
- The lilac light shines from your Crown Chakra, the center of spirituality, uniting you with the All.

Imagine that the energy of each chakra converges in a flow from a column of light that moves from the base of your spine to the top of your head. The energy roots you to the earth and connects you with the heavens. Feel this column of luminous energy radiating from you, like a rainbow that is your unique expression or vibration of being. This energy vibration is you,

the energetic field through which you are recognized by all others. As you radiate the unique energy of your being, feel a deep sense of peace, joy, and gratitude for the gift that is your life.

Enjoy this moment, recognizing that, no matter what happens in your life, you are grounded and connected to the source of your being. When you feel ready, slowly return to the present moment and to this room.

Part 3 – Returning to the Present Moment

Begin to reconnect with your body, take a deep breath, and focus on your feet and toes. You may wish to stretch and flex your feet and toes to feel the connection with your body. I will count from five to one, and with each number, you will feel more present in your body, in this room.



Five. Breathe deeply, stretch, and flex your legs, feeling the energy flowing completely through you.

Four. Stretch and flex your torso, feeling fully alive in your pelvis, abdomen, chest, and shoulders.

Three. Stretch and flex your arms and hands, feeling the energy flowing fully through your arms.

Two. Breathe and gently flex your neck and facial muscles, feeling deeply alive and relaxed in your head.

One. Take a deep breath, and when you're ready, open your eyes.

Feel relaxed and at peace, fully present in the moment and in this room. Take a few moments in silence to reflect on your journey through the chakras. You may want to write or draw about your experience, or perhaps share it with a friend.





Herbarium of Traditional Mexican Medicine¹⁰





Avocado

Persea americana Miller. / *Lauraceae*

The avocado plant is frequently reported in the treatment of ascaris, intestinal worms, and parasites. It is highly recommended for gynecological conditions, with an infusion of its leaves used for menstrual cramps and to facilitate childbirth, typically mixed with salt. This infusion is consumed on an empty stomach in cases of amenorrhea or during pregnancy when experiencing aches, fatigue, and swollen feet. It is also suggested to “remove postpartum discomforts.” The avocado seed is used to treat female infertility. Additionally, the plant is employed to increase breast milk production, relieve dysmenorrhea, control vaginal bleeding, treat sexual impotence, spasms, postpartum recovery, induce labor, and address various menstrual disorders.

For digestive issues such as diarrhea, it is recommended to boil the leaves of the plant with chamomile and mint, then drink this infusion like a regular beverage with a pinch of baking soda. In cases of indigestion, an infusion prepared from avocado seeds and coconut husk is consumed.

For skin problems, the fruit’s fat or fresh leaves are rubbed onto white spots several times a day. To prevent or stop hair loss, the leaf or seed is ground or mashed, placed in water, and applied to the scalp with oil 15 minutes before bathing; this can be repeated up to three times a day for treating ringworm. To relieve bruises, a poultice combined with horehound is applied.



Garlic

Allium sativum L./ *Liliaceae*

It is used to combat intestinal parasites and is also employed in digestive disorders such as stomach pain, intestinal gas, and constipation. Additionally, it is used to treat rheumatism and skin issues such as chilblains, warts, scabies, ringworm, and pimples. It is also applied for spider, ant, or scorpion stings. It is utilized in respiratory illnesses such as cough, sore throat, asthma, irritated throat, hoarseness, and bronchitis, as well as for general

pains, including back, head, muscle, and ear pain; for the latter, it is used locally.

It is attributed with abortive properties and is used to accelerate labor. It regulates fever, high blood pressure, and heart function. It is also employed for conditions like fatigue, varicose veins, nervousness, insomnia, anemia, urinary issues, dental cavities, and ear infections. It is used for ailments such as “bad air” and the “evil eye.”

Basil

Prunella vulgaris L. / *Labiatae*

This plant is primarily used to treat diarrhea and relieve stomach pain. It is also employed in certain obstetric conditions, such as vaginal infections or inflammation. Additionally, it is used for various dermatological conditions, including boils, scabies, styes, and wounds, as well as for rheumatism, cough, and eye infections.

It is also traditionally prescribed for a condition known as *latido*, described as a sensation caused by not eating, commonly referred to as “air in the pit of the stomach.” Furthermore, it is used for thoracic pain attributed to “internal injuries left untreated.” Other ailments for which it is indicated include inflammation, bloating, fever, and even cancer.


Star Anise

Illicium verum Hook. / *Magnoliaceae*

The fruit and flowers, when boiled, are used to relieve colic in newborns and young children. It is administered in small doses—two teaspoons, three times a day—for infants. For adults, the flowers are boiled in water, and the infusion is consumed as a tea, one cup three times a day.

Star anise is also recommended for various digestive disorders, including stomach pain, hiccups, and vomiting. Additionally, it is used to treat dysentery. The plant is traditionally consumed to





stimulate lactation; women drink an infusion made from fennel seeds, commercial anise, and star anise as a daily beverage. It has also been historically used as a contraceptive and to treat excessive vaginal discharge.

Chayote


Sechium edule Swartz / *Cucurbitaceae*

Chayote is believed to aid in the treatment of anemia and is considered a preventive remedy for cancer. The boiled leaves are consumed as a medicinal tea or daily drinking water for a variety of renal and urinary conditions. It is used to dissolve kidney and bladder stones, commonly referred to as mal de piedra. The decoction is often prepared with chayote leaves, chaya, chickpeas, corn silk, and barley.

It is also used to alleviate urinary disorders, such as kidney and bladder inflammation, often in combination with pingüica (*Arc-tostaphylos pungens*) and loquat (*Eriobotrya japonica*). For kidney cleansing, cooked chayote is traditionally consumed in the morning and evening. Additionally, it is used as a diuretic and to treat mal de orín, a condition characterized by painful and difficult urination due to urethral inflammation. The plant is also employed to improve urine flow and is considered beneficial for high blood pressure, arteriosclerosis, and varicose veins.

Furthermore, chayote is utilized for digestive ailments. The leaf infusion is consumed as a cooling drink to alleviate stomach heat. The plant is used in various ways: in cases of emotional distress or bile imbalance, the boiled or crushed leaves are consumed as an herbal drink; for stomach pain, the plant is mixed with oil and rubbed onto the affected area; for constipation, it is taken as an infusion; and to counteract hangovers, the fruit is eaten to soothe the stomach.

In Oaxaca, chayote is traditionally used as an anthelmintic, either by drinking the boiled leaves or chewing them to eliminate intestinal parasites. Additionally, it is employed to treat bladder stones, vomiting, and nervous conditions.



Horsetail

Equisetum myriochaetum Schlechtendal & Cham. / Equisetaceae

Horsetail is commonly used, either alone or in combination with other medicinal plants, for the treatment of kidney and urinary tract disorders. It is also traditionally employed to alleviate “kidney burning,” a condition believed to result from strenuous labor that involves frequent bending, such as weeding, or from prolonged periods of sitting.

On the other hand, a decoction of the entire plant is also used to treat digestive disorders such as gastritis, ulcers, vomiting, stomach pain, and inflammation. It is even consumed to alleviate hemorrhoidal bleeding and fatigue. The whole plant is boiled, sometimes in combination with corn silk, and taken orally to treat kidney ailments, commonly referred to as *mal de orín* (a condition associated with painful or difficult urination).

Among certain Indigenous groups, the plant is considered to have a warming nature and is traditionally used to enhance fertility. When consumed as a daily beverage, it is also believed to strengthen bones.

Epazote

Telexys ambrosioides (L.) Weber / Chenopodiaceae

Epazote is widely used for various ailments, primarily those affecting the digestive system. It is particularly valued for its antiparasitic properties, as it is traditionally consumed on an empty stomach to expel intestinal worms. This is typically achieved by ingesting a decoction made from the plant’s branches or, in some cases, its root, prepared in either water or milk. The infusion is sometimes combined with wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*), *estafiate* (*Artemisia ludoviciana*), or *peppermint* (*Mentha spicata*) to enhance its efficacy.

A common folk belief advises preparing epazote tea outside the presence of the patient, as it is said that “the worms can smell



the remedy and will not come out.” In addition to its antiparasitic use, epazote is frequently employed to relieve stomach pain, diarrhea, and vomiting.

Among the Tarahumara people, concentrated epazote teas are considered potentially hazardous and are reserved for severe cases of parasitic infections when other herbal treatments have proven ineffective.

Epazote is also used to address menstrual irregularities, including delayed or scant menstruation, for which an infusion of the plant’s branches is consumed. Additionally, it is employed to stimulate uterine contractions during labor and to aid postpartum recovery by facilitating the expulsion of retained matter. The plant is traditionally used as an abortifacient and to treat infertility, often in the form of vaginal washes intended to cleanse the uterus or “purge” the mother after childbirth. During the postpartum period, midwives recommend a chocolate-based atole with epazote to enhance milk production in lactating mothers.

Beyond its gynecological applications, epazote is believed to be effective against scorpion stings and warts. When applied as a poultice—either alone or combined with tobacco and salt—it is used to treat wounds. It is also employed in baths or as a topical application for sprains and, in crushed or infused form, for various skin conditions.

Furthermore, epazote is valued in traditional medicine for treating ailments associated with supernatural afflictions, such as espanto (fright or soul loss), mal de aire (a condition believed to result from exposure to malevolent winds), and mal de ojo (evil eye). To counteract espanto, a preparation made from crushed epazote leaves, alcohol, pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*), and garlic is rubbed onto the patient’s body at night.

Guava

Psidium guajava L. / *Myrtaceae*

Guava, a medicinal plant classified as having a “hot” nature in traditional medicine, holds significant therapeutic value today.



It is currently used to treat over 40 ailments affecting populations across various regions of Mexico.

One of its most common applications is in the treatment of gastrointestinal disorders, particularly diarrhea, which is characterized by frequent, watery bowel movements, stomach pain, yellow or yellow-green stool, and chills. The leaves are prepared as an infusion, while the fruit, either consumed on an empty stomach or boiled, serves as an anthelmintic agent effective against parasitic worms and amoebas.

Other notable uses include its role in treating *empacho* (a condition associated with indigestion or food stagnation). Guava leaves, in the form of infusions or decoctions, are also widely used in dermatological treatments. Applied topically as washes, rinses, or poultices, they are employed to address hair loss, skin eruptions, rashes, jotes (a type of skin infection), acne, itching, measles, scarlet fever, and scabies.

Wild peppermint (Hierbabuena del monte)

Didymaea alsinoides (Schlechtendal & Cham.) Standley / Rubiaceae

This plant is widely recognized for its digestive benefits, particularly due to its antispasmodic and carminative properties. Its infusion is recommended for alleviating flatulent digestion, as it stimulates bile and gastric secretions without causing irritation or discomfort to the body. It is commonly used to treat colic and stomach spasms.

Additionally, *Hierbabuena del Monte* is valued for its respiratory applications. Due to its menthol content, it serves as an effective expectorant for treating respiratory ailments. In cases of asthma, a traditional remedy consists of preparing an infusion with equal parts of hierbabuena and chamomile, to be consumed during asthma attacks. To prevent asthma or alleviate its symptoms, another common preparation involves mixing equal parts of hierbabuena and white horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), infusing one tablespoon of the blend in a cup of water, and drinking the infusion three times a day.





As an antiseptic, the infusion is used in gargles or other internal treatments, offering notable antiviral and antifungal properties.

To alleviate discomfort caused by rashes or other allergic reactions, it is recommended to mix a small amount of antiseptic alcohol with macerated hierbabuena del monte leaves. Using a cotton pad, gently rub the mixture onto the affected area to provide a cooling effect and relieve itching.

For headaches and migraines, add two teaspoons of fresh leaves to half a liter of boiling water. Cover and let steep off the heat for 50 minutes. After straining and filtering, the tea should be consumed cold, with two to three cups recommended at the onset of symptoms. Alternatively, a mixture of 10 drops of peppermint essential oil and one tablespoon of olive oil can be applied to the temples using a gentle fingertip massage.

The primary medicinal use of this plant is for stomach pain, with boiled branches administered orally. For headaches, it is traditionally ground together with *altamisa* (chamomile-like plant), rue, tejocote (Mexican hawthorn), and tobacco. This mixture is then macerated in alcohol, heated in a tin, and applied to the nape and temples. Additionally, whole-plant infusions are used in therapeutic baths to treat ailments attributed to “bad air” (*el aire*). Folk wisdom also attributes a calming and soothing effect on emotions to hierbabuena del monte, suggesting it “softens and sweetens the feelings.”



Mexican pepperleaf (Hierba santa)

Piper sanctum (Miq.) Schlechtendal / Piperaceae

Hierba santa is traditionally used to treat digestive ailments, fevers, and various inflammatory conditions. For cases of empacho (a folk illness associated with indigestion), fever reduction, or localized swelling accompanied by fever, the leaves are applied to the feet with oil or lard. When used for stomach disorders, the leaves are similarly coated with lard and baking soda before being applied topically.

For stomach pain relief, an infusion of the plant is prepared and consumed in small cups. This same infusion, taken three times a day, is also believed to help alleviate symptoms of the flu. When consumed on an empty stomach for nine consecutive days, it is traditionally used as a remedy for varicose veins.

In postpartum care, *hierba santa* decoctions are employed in baths for newborns and mothers, particularly to cleanse the uterus or address conditions referred to as *quipupuas*. In such cases, the infusion is also consumed as a daily beverage. The plant is commonly used to treat diarrhea, cavities, *empacho*, cough, asthma, insomnia, nervous conditions, general pain, burns, and *mal de ojo* (the “evil eye”).

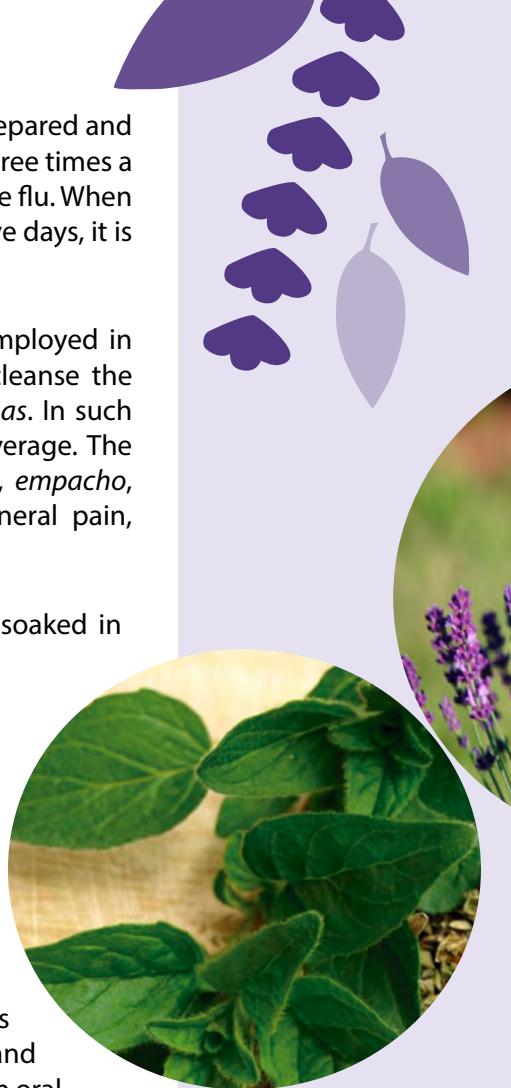
For inflammatory conditions, a warm leaf—briefly soaked in hot water—is applied directly to the affected area.

Castor bean (Higuerilla)

Ricinus communis L. / Euphorbiaceae

It is primarily used to reduce fever and alleviate bile. Similarly, it is used for “stomach fevers” caused by prolonged sun exposure, where heat is trapped in the body, leading to a lack of appetite, nausea, and an inability to tolerate any food, when there is sadness and burning in the stomach). The seed is used in various conditions as a purgative, crushed and taken as medicinal water. When ground dry and taken orally, it is used in cases of diabetes. Topically, it is applied to muscle pain. The oil extracted from the seed is applied to skin swellings, pimples, and insect bites, typically before bedtime.

Additionally, it is used in digestive disorders such as acidity, diarrhea, dysentery, dry indigestion, constipation, “stomach relapse,” and typhoid. It is also employed in respiratory conditions like angina (chest pain), lung pain, colds, “runny-nosed children,” and other respiratory illnesses. Postpartum, it is used to strengthen the ovaries and treat afterpains. It is also used for skin problems such as scabies, hair conditions, erysipelas,



pimples, chafing, and measles. Other conditions in which this plant is used include colic, cuts, abdominal and chest pain, shin splints, chills in children, sores, and snake bites. Castor oil is produced from the seed for purging purposes.

Oregano

Origanum vulgare L. *Labiatae*

This aromatic and culinary plant possesses certain medicinal properties that are applied to treat various gastric and gynecological conditions. It is believed to cure gastroenteritis and is recommended for cough treatment. An infusion made from the entire plant should be consumed on an empty stomach and at night before bed. When there is fever and chest pain, this decoction is mixed with cinnamon and taken as needed.

It also works against dysmenorrhea and can induce abortion. For good digestion and to relieve general colic, including menstrual cramps, an infusion made from the leaves, stems, or flowers is prepared and taken orally. It is used to treat indigestion. Additionally, to soothe ear pain, infection, or discomfort from itching or stabbing sensations, a few drops of juice extracted and strained from fresh ground leaves are applied.

The use of oregano is also mentioned in cases of worm infestations. The leaves and flowers are placed in boiling water,

the pot is covered, removed from the heat; once it has been filtered it's recommended to drink one cup per day. Other reported uses for this plant include treating cases where breast milk disagrees with infants, as well as alleviating baby colic, stomach pain, bronchitis, hoarseness, and tooth decay due to its mildly antibiotic properties.

Lavender

Lavandula spp / *l.dentata*

Lavender is primarily used in connection with insomnia, anxiety, depression, and mood swings, due to its medicinal properties



that can produce calming, relaxing, and anticonvulsant effects in humans. It may also help alleviate headaches and migraines. Lavender has emollient and antioxidant properties and works effectively as an antiseptic, analgesic, and anti-inflammatory. Additionally, it aids digestion and serves as an effective insect repellent. It is also used to combat dandruff.

Loquat

Eriobotrya japonica Lindl. / *Rosaceae*

The loquat is primarily recommended for treating diabetes. For this condition, a decoction is made from the leaves or flowers, which is then allowed to steep and consumed unsweetened, three times a day or as a general tonic. In cases of varicose veins or poor circulation, the decoction of the leaves is combined with the bark of the pochote tree and consumed as a medicinal water, which also serves to cleanse the kidneys due to its diuretic properties and its ability to reduce uric acid levels. Additionally, a decoction of the fruit and bark is used to purify the blood and treat kidney ailments, such as urinary disorders. The plant is also reported to help expel gallstones and calm the nerves, as it possesses anti-inflammatory properties.

Bearberry

Arctostaphylos pungens Kunth / *Ericaceae*

The bearberry plant is mainly recommended for the treatment of renal conditions, such as urinary disorders, urinary retention, and kidney pain caused by overexertion. The leaves, roots, or whole plant are used in an infusion, sweetened to taste, and consumed as a tonic, especially on an empty stomach. To alleviate fever, an infusion of the plant can be consumed, or a bath can be taken using a decoction of the branches and leaves mixed with Palmolive soap and milk. Its use is also recorded for treating diarrhea, stomach pain, indigestion, cough, gonorrhea, leucorrhea, prostatitis, rheumatism, edema, and inflammation. For enhanced effect, it can be combined with



other herbs such as horsetail and corn silk, or used in juices with alfalfa, pineapple, pingüica, lemon, and honey.

Pennyroyal

Mentha pulegium L. / *Labiatae*



Pennyroyal is commonly used for respiratory conditions such as a congested cold. The typical remedy involves inhaling the vapors from a decoction to which alcohol is added. To treat a cough, a syrup is prepared by boiling pennyroyal leaves along with mallow flowers and sugar until it reaches a starchy consistency, then straining and allowing it to cool. It is also used to relieve symptoms of a cold or flu, particularly for those suffering from hoarseness or bronchitis. Additionally, pennyroyal is employed to treat dysentery, and mucous diarrhea. It is used to alleviate indigestion in infants by mixing ground pennyroyal leaves with breast milk, which is then left to dry in the sun. The resulting residue is placed on the infant's belly button and hips, while the remaining milk is given to drink. Pennyroyal is also used to treat chills, with a tincture prepared from the plant's branches mixed with hot alcohol, which is rubbed onto the affected area as needed.

Other conditions it assists with include colic, stomach pain, the removal of deep pimples, and headache relief. It is also recognized for its digestive properties.

Rosemary

Rosmarinus officinalis L. / *Labiatae*

This aromatic shrub has numerous medicinal uses, including for various digestive disorders such as stomach pain, indigestion, bile issues, ulcers, diarrhea, anger, gastritis, colitis, gas, appendicitis, and as an anti-inflammatory for the stomach.

It is used to treat gynecological disorders, such as placenta retention and post-partum washing, as well as vaginal infections,

to support female fertility, prevent miscarriage, and alleviate vaginal discharge. The plant is employed for skin issues, including wound healing, canker sores, and measles, and helps prevent hair loss, as well as for washing the hair and combating dandruff.

Additionally, it is applied to relieve muscular pain, back and hip discomfort, bone pain, bruises, rheumatism, joint inflammation, and arthritis. It is also used for respiratory conditions, including colds, sore throat, coughs, bronchitis, and whooping cough. The plant is used for cleansing rituals and healing in cases of “evil eye,” fright, and “bad air.”

Other medicinal uses include treatment for varicose veins, hemorrhoids, heart pain, exhaustion, fever, dizziness, migraines, sunken fontanelle, epileptic seizures, eye strain, colic, and intestinal parasites. It is also an aid for good circulation, skin rashes, and varicose veins, and is known to stimulate memory.

Rue

Ruta graveolens L. / Rutaceae

Rue is primarily used to alleviate stomach pain caused by over-eating. In this case, an infusion of rue branches and chamomile, taken without sugar as a general tonic, or a decoction of the leaves with salt, is recommended. This discomfort is also believed to result from walking barefoot (exposure to cold), leading to stomach pain and inflammation. In such cases, the infusion of rue branches is consumed. If the pain is attributed to anger, it is suggested to drink a tea made from the rue branches, with or without flowers, on an empty stomach daily until relief is achieved.

Rue is commonly used to treat earaches, which are described as intense, often occurring when individuals move from a warm to a colder environment. To alleviate the pain, a rue branch is roasted, wrapped in cotton, and placed inside the ear. For bile issues, an infusion of rue leaves is consumed for nine days, or the leaves are ground and squeezed in water or pulque (fermented





agave drink), without sugar. In both cases, it should be taken on an empty stomach.

Rue is also widely used for various gynecological issues, such as menstrual cramps. In these cases, a tea made from rue branches, epazote, and peppermint leaves is taken when pain occurs. To assist with childbirth (oxytotic properties), regulate menstruation, induce abortion, relieve spasms, and stimulate lactation, the leaves, stems, and fruit, mashed and mixed with sweet pepper, are boiled and consumed.

Additionally, rue is frequently used for “wind” pains, with an infusion of the branches or flowers combined with peach seeds taken on an empty stomach. These pains, caused by leaving a warm place without proper covering, can be treated by soaking rue leaves in alcohol and rubbing the body with it until the pain subsides. For “wind” affecting the mouth (twisting of the mouth) or trapped air in the ears, the leaves are rubbed on the affected area.



For “wind” that manifests as a headache, rue is used alone, fried in lard, and gently massaged into the temples. It is also part of the cleansing herbs used to cure fright or soul loss, which causes heart pain. To treat this, a healer macerates rue, anise, and poleo in pox (a regional spirit) with piloncillo (raw sugar) and leaves the mixture exposed to sunlight and the night air for three days. This remedy is consumed in a small daily dose on an empty stomach.

Other uses of rue include treating stomach cramps, indigestion, bloating, colds, coughs, arthritis, wounds, varicose veins, epilepsy attacks, fever, headaches, irritability, and loss of appetite.

Aloe Vera

Aloe vera L. / *Liliaceae*

It has laxative, diuretic, and healing properties. It is commonly used for skin conditions such as swelling, heat rashes, and bruises, which are treated by applying the leaf as a poultice, also serving as a healing agent. It is used for sunburns, pimples, and



dark spots. To treat these conditions, the leaves are crushed with a board during the summer and winter, and boiled with cinnamon, peppers, cloves, honey, and pasilla chili, to be consumed three times a day. It is also used to treat jotes, pimples, dandruff, and for hair care.

For diabetes, the yellow liquid is taken orally on an empty stomach, accompanied by nopal. The sap is applied externally for post-partum abdominal pain and to help wean children by applying it to the nipples. It is used for respiratory conditions such as whooping cough, cough, colds, tonsillitis, bronchitis, and catarrh, to reduce inflammation and swelling, and also to heal sores. The leaf is opened, the “flesh” is extracted, boiled, and consumed as tea, or alternatively, a leaf is split in half and applied as a poultice once or twice a day (depending on the swelling), or a bath is taken with the leaf infusion combined with other plants.

For abdominal or bile inflammation, the heart or pulp of the leaf is boiled and consumed on an empty stomach for two or three days, depending on the patient’s condition. In cases of tonsil inflammation, roasted leaves are placed on the front of the neck three times a day. For swollen feet, the “flesh” is applied to the soles as needed.

It is also used for inflammation in the stomach, liver, intestines, or vagina; in these cases, a leaf is peeled, boiled, and applied. This remedy also helps relieve stomach ulcers, with the sap boiled in water being consumed.

To treat a cough, the flowers are boiled and consumed three times a day with honey. Additionally, at night, a leaf is cut lengthwise and roasted over a flame, then removed from the heat, with a few drops of alcohol added, placed on the neck, tied with a cloth, and removed once it cools. For lung pain, the leaf is split in half, roasted, and when warm, applied to the back to draw out the heat, but only for a short period, as it dries quickly. This is done at night for three consecutive nights. For whooping cough, foot and seat baths



are given, and warm compresses are placed on the chest with the flower infusion.

For stagnant pimples, the sap is applied in drops. To relieve anxiety, the leaf infusion is ingested. To prevent hair loss, the leaf is applied locally; additionally, for pimples and blackheads, a fresh piece of leaf is placed on the affected area.

Thyme

Thymus vulgaris L. / *Labiatae*

Thyme possesses medicinal antibiotic properties for the respiratory tract, particularly in treating coughs with boiled branches. This decoction is sweetened and administered at night for three consecutive days. In cases of diarrhea, it is recommended to use the stems and leaves to prepare a tea, which, when sweetened, is consumed three times a day before meals. To relieve heartburn, a few drops of lemon are added to this preparation and taken for three days. It is also used against *Escherichia*, *Salmonella*, and *Staphylococcus*, *Streptococcus* and intestinal parasites can be treated by preparing a tea as follows: add the plant to boiling water, cover, and remove from heat immediately. The infusion is consumed after meals for three consecutive days, accompanied by a mild laxative. Thyme is also used to alleviate stomach pain, toothaches, and menstrual cramps, as well as to soothe an irritated throat, eliminate excess milk, and reduce nervousness. Some authors attribute properties such as antispasmodic, carminative, and stimulating effects to thyme.





Teas and Infusions¹¹



Herbal teas and infusions are effective natural remedies that grandmothers would give us to heal both physical and emotional ailments. Reviving this traditional knowledge will help strengthen our bodies. The recipes we share come from three wise women well-versed in traditional medicine from Oaxaca, and one of them is an Indian woman who learned and lives by the principles of Ayurvedic medicine. It is important to pay attention to and address the physical and emotional discomforts that your body expresses, and not neglect your health.

Preparation

Making the teas and infusions is straightforward: bring a liter of water to a boil, then add the pre-chopped ingredients. Cover the pot, turn off the heat, and let it steep for 3 to 4 minutes. Once the time's up, strain it and pour into a cup. It's best not to sweeten it. The rest of the infusion should be strained and cooled in a separate glass container. Drink three cups throughout the day: morning, afternoon, and evening.

Digestive Tea

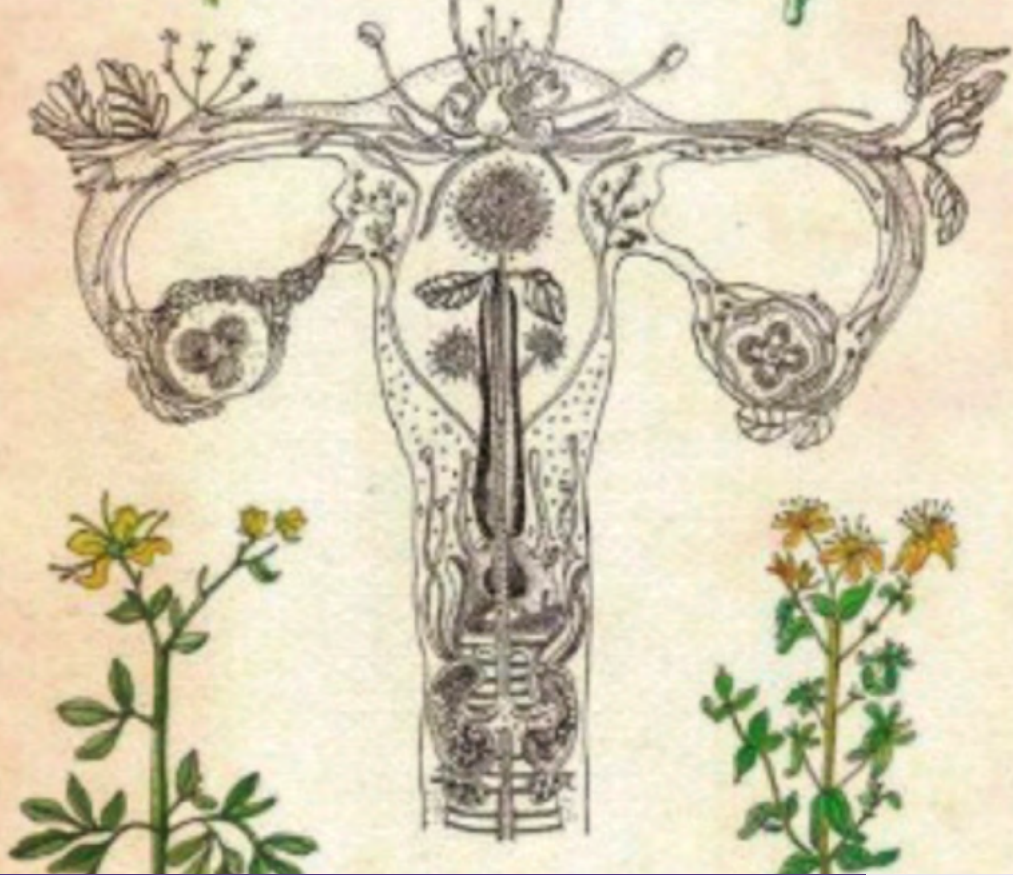
- * Lemon grass, 2 handfuls or 4 tablespoons
- * Thyme, 1 handful or 2 tablespoons
- Not recommended for pregnant women

Relaxing Tea

- * Lavender, 1 handful
- * Castile / white rose, 4 flowers
- * Chamomile, 2 handfuls

Immune Boost Tea

- * Dandelion, a pinch (as much as your fingertips can hold)
- * Moringa, a pinch (as much as your fingertips can hold)
- Take daily for a month, rest for a month and repeat for another month taking the tea.



Vaginal Steaming¹²



Vaginal steam treatments are traditional care practices that women used to perform, reflecting the deep connection between plants and their medicinal properties. Reviving these practices allows us to reclaim collective knowledge of care, reconnect with our bodies, and engage in healing processes.

The uterus is often referred to as our second heart, which underscores the importance of dedicating attention and care to it in order to release what no longer serves us.

It is essential to understand that if you experience chronic discomfort or ailments, you should seek support from knowledgeable women such as midwives, traditional healers, doulas, or other practitioners who can guide you through the process with warmth and understanding.

How to perform a vaginal steam treatment?

It's quite simple. First, select the herbs, preferably from your own garden, ensuring they are free from pesticides. Since the essence of the plant will be absorbed through the membranes of your vagina and quickly enter your bloodstream, it's crucial to make sure the plants are clean. Also, remember to wash them before use.

In a large pot (5 to 7 liters), bring that amount of water to a boil. Once it begins to boil, add the herbs and turn off the heat. At the same time, prepare a mild, pleasant tea—such as chamomile—and sweeten it with sugar or honey. This tea will be consumed during the steaming process and after finishing the treatment.

Once the infusions are ready, find a comfortable space to carry out the steam treatment. Position a small stool where you can sit while keeping your vaginal area exposed, or alternatively, squat or kneel to experience the steam. Place the pot of herbs beneath your vagina, gradually lowering yourself to a distance of about 10 to 15 centimeters from the infusion, adjusting the heat to avoid burning yourself. Cover yourself completely with a blanket to trap the steam.

You should stay in the steam for 20 to 30 minutes, or until you feel the heat has diminished. At that point, stir the herbal water with more warm water and use it to take a bath. Make sure to keep yourself warm, avoiding any exposure to air or cold. Drink another cup of the tea you prepared to stay hydrated. It is best to do this treatment at night to help you relax and sleep.

You can perform this steam treatment once or twice a month.

* Pay attention to how you feel with the heat. If you begin to feel dizzy, nauseous, or shaky, it's time to leave the steam and lie down.

* It's not recommended to do this steam treatment during your menstruation.

Healing Embrace

(Relaxing and anti-inflammatory)

An ideal companion for moments of pain and sadness.

* Arnica, two handfuls

* Rosemary, two handfuls

* Chamomile, two handfuls

*Herbal baths for healing13

Basil, two handfuls

* Mallow, two handfuls

Feminine Breath

(Cleansing and pampering your femininity)

*Basil, two handfuls

*Camomile, two handfuls

*Rose petals Pink, 3 flowers



Healing herbal bath¹³



Our ancestors have passed down their worldview of healing and care for various ailments and conditions through the use of plants, flowers, roots, stems, and other elements of nature. A herbal bath is a way of trusting in the healing power that has been cultivated for thousands of years, helping to relax, reduce inflammation, and refresh the body. It also aids in releasing and cleansing the emotions and energies we carry from different experiences, which can be difficult to express.

The baths we share here are inspired by common experiences among women defenders: when our sadness runs deep and has lingered for months due to constant grief, when exhaustion and fatigue demand that our bodies renew and protect our energy, and lastly, when we feel disconnected from our own bodies, heavy, and burdened with a weariness that goes beyond the physical—when external energies, “bad vibes,” have blocked us.

Depression/Grieving Bath

Boil 7 liters of water, and once it reaches a boil, add the petals of 5 red roses, covering the container for 5 minutes. Strain the prepared infusion and adjust the water temperature to a level that is comfortable for you. Use this water at the end of your regular bath, applying it all over your body, including your head.

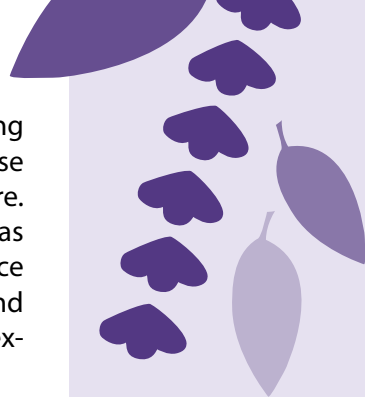
It is recommended to do this bath at night before sleeping. Repeat for 3 consecutive nights.

Energizing Body Bath

Boil 5 to 7 litres of water, once it boils add a small bunch of rue and another small bunch of basil, turn off the heat and leave the infusion to stand for 5 minutes.

Use this water, at a temperature to your liking, at the end of a normal bath, wetting your whole body including your head.

Take 3 baths on different days during the week.



Bad Vibes Bath

Boil 5 to 7 litres of water, add a small bunch of rue, leave to stand for 10 minutes. When the water is at a comfortable temperature for bathing, add 100 millilitres of 96% alcohol, a little (2 table-spoons) of ether and the powder from 6 camphor tablets.

Rinse the whole body and head with this water at the end of a normal bath.

Take 3 baths in a row.

*You can find the camphor tablets in a chemist's or pharmacy.





Detox and Cleansing Diet¹⁴



Purpose

This dietary proposal is designed to be followed for a period of one to three weeks and can be highly beneficial for defenders and activists, as it helps to cleanse and detoxify the body from substances that cause inflammation, constipation, and digestive heaviness. With the fast-paced rhythm of life and the limited time we dedicate to consciously nourishing our bodies, we tend to develop unhealthy habits, such as consuming junk food, excessive amounts of refined flour and sugars, insufficient fruits, vegetables, and seeds, or extended periods of unplanned fasting — in other words, we “mismanage” our nutrition. Paying attention to and caring for our eating habits by incorporating locally sourced, unprocessed foods, fresh vegetables, etc., will provide us with better energy and make us feel lighter.

The Diet

The following proposed diet is based on the balanced combination of the four essential food groups for proper nutrition. Animal-based foods are eliminated from this diet. However, if an individual expresses a need for this group of foods, it is recommended to include four servings of low-fat panela cheese (80 grams in total) per day.

This diet is designed to be followed in five meals, in the following order: breakfast, mid-morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack, and dinner. It is advised that the final meal (dinner) be consumed no later than 8:00 p.m.

General Recommendations:

1. Throughout the diet it's recommended that on an empty stomach you drink a teaspoon of olive oil and a glass of warm water with a drop of lemon, as this will help the food to be better metabolised.
2. Drink at least two litres of pure water a day. Avoid cold water during meals.

3. Eliminate all sugars and processed foods, including boxed cereals). If you need a sweet taste, you can make stevia infusion to sweeten liquids.
4. Salad dressings are prepared with just a tablespoon of olive oil and spices to taste.
5. Eliminate soft drinks or bottled juices.
6. When choosing vegetables, go for lots of leafy greens and minimise potatoes and carrots as much as possible.
7. When preparing cooked or parboiled foods, avoid excess oil; in any case, it is better to eat them raw and only with olive oil.

Below are suggested menu options for each meal. You may choose the combinations that suit your preferences. It is very important to consume each option in its entirety and NOT skip any meal. The ideal approach is to eat slowly, ensuring you have all five meals, in sufficient quantities, while avoiding overeating.

Breakfast Options. Always at the beginning: A cup of fruit: papaya, apple, melon, prickly pear, orange, guava, mango.

Main course ideas

1. Green or red chilaquiles with beans
2. Two grilled quesadillas with mushrooms, squash blossom, jicama tinga with tomato, green beans or spinach with onion
3. Entomatadas (corn tortillas) stuffed with vegetables and beans
4. A bowl of porridge with seeds: almonds, cranberries, walnuts, pistachios
5. Wholemeal hot cakes with slices of fruit cooked into them with maguey syrup
6. Hummus sandwich with lettuce, or two molletes (wholemeal bread) of beans with pico de gallo
7. Two toasted corn tortillas with guacamole and tomato slices





8. Dish of cooked oats with nuts
9. Vegetable or bean tamales

One Cup Liquids: Tea or coffee, water-based atoles: oatmeal, amaranth, pinole, rice;

Snack Options: One for mid-morning and one for mid-afternoon:

1. A cup of steamed vegetables: corn, green beans, squash, beetroot, asparagus, chayote, chickpeas, chives, green beans, broccoli, Brussels sprouts
2. Half a cup of seeds
3. A slice of bread with peanut butter or honey
4. A whole piece of fruit or a cup of grapes, plums, capulin cherries.
5. A cup of grated or cut raw vegetables with lemon and chilli: jicama, carrot, beetroot, cucumber, pumpkin,
6. A water-based sugar-free jelly with a slice of fruit
7. Fruit cooked with cinnamon
8. Wholemeal oat or amaranth biscuits

Meals

Always to start: A mixed salad of raw and cooked vegetables. Include lots of green vegetables (chard, spinach, kale, purslane, arugula, various lettuces).

Second Course

First Option: Soups made with broths and various vegetables: onion soup with roasted corn strips; mixed vegetable soup; leek soup; pumpkin flower soup; xochitl broth (pumpkin, pobla-

no chilli and corn), spinach or chard with noodles, beet broth with nutmeg; cold red tomato soup (gazpacho) with pieces of celery and Indian walnut.

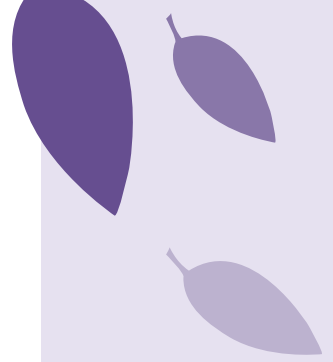
Second Option: Stews (ground or whole legumes cooked with spices): lentils with fruit or with tomato and onion; broad beans, chickpeas, kidney beans, beans, quinoa.

Third Meal

Main Dish Options:

1. Corn tostadas with mushroom, bell pepper, and spice salad.
2. Pomodoro-style pasta (roasted and ground tomatoes with spices, onion, garlic, and rosemary) topped with olives and a vegetable of choice.
3. Grilled taquitos filled with boiled hibiscus flowers (soak the hibiscus in cold water for several hours, drain, dry, and cook with onion and tomato). Serve with lettuce, tomato, onion, and avocado.
4. Purslane with mushrooms and miltomate sauce (green tomato).
5. Yellow chanterelles with "corn patties."
6. Vegetarian pozole: hominy cooked in vegetable broth, with mushrooms or chanterelles replacing meat. Served with lettuce, radishes, onion, and avocado.
7. Baked eggplant casserole with tomato sauce and basil.
8. Couscous supreme with steamed vegetables, olive oil, and soy sauce.

Liquids: Take them half an hour before or after meals: herbal infusions at room temperature or warm, hibiscus water, lemon, tamarind, horchata (made with oats or melon seeds) without sugar.



Dinner Options:

1. Shredded cabbage salad with avocado.
2. Toasted bread with roasted eggplant and red pepper purée, seasoned with a touch of olive oil and seeds (escabada style).
3. Baked broccoli (in aluminum foil) with peanuts.
4. Taquitos filled with holy basil, zucchini flowers, and steamed corn, served with a green tomato salsa (miltomate).
5. Memelitas with seed fat and grilled cactus.
6. Oat croquettes (to make the dough, mix with a little almond milk), which can be sweet or savory.
7. Soft fruit salad.

Liquids: Tea or coffee, water-based atoles: oatmeal, amaranth, pinole, rice.





Juices¹⁵



Below is a list of ingredients for a glass of juice. Suggested on an empty stomach.

Alkaline Juice

Alkaline foods help enhance nutrient levels in cells, supporting better overall functioning from the heartbeat to brain activity.

Ingredients:

- 1 cucumber (can be used with cleaned skin)
- 5 sprigs of parsley
- 1 tablespoon of lemon zest (using clean skin)
- Juice of one lemon
- A pinch of pepper

Preparation: Extract the juice from the cucumber and blend the remaining ingredients.

Ayurvedic Digestive Juice

It aids in the chemical process of digestion by helping to break down and absorb the essential nutrients needed for cells and organs, while eliminating what is no longer necessary.

Ingredients:

- 1 prickly pear (nopal)
- 1/2 carrot
- 1 apple
- 1/3 cucumber
- Juice of one lemon

Preparation: Blend the ingredients without straining.

If you have colitis or advanced gastritis, blend for a longer period until it becomes more liquid and strain. If prickly pear is unavailable, you can substitute it with aloe vera (sábila).

Immune Boost Juices

The immune system is responsible for protecting the body from viruses, bacteria, and pathogens. It boosts lymphocytes and antibodies.

Ingredients:

1/2 orange

3 segments of grapefruit

A piece of ginger (about the size of a finger)

1 tablespoon of coconut water

Preparation: Blend the ingredients without straining.



Foot reflexology:
The body's reflection
in the feet¹⁶



We have all experienced how a simple and gentle foot massage can be incredibly relaxing and pleasant. However, reflexology goes far beyond just the enjoyable sensation of relaxation in our feet. Reflexology (RTP) is practiced with the thumbs (and other parts of the hands), massaging painful points on the feet. While this may cause temporary discomfort, it also brings short- and medium-term well-being.

It can be said that the scope of RTP includes all conditions, disorders, or diseases in which the body is capable of restoring the deviation or imbalance it is experiencing. This is because each organ or anatomical structure is reflected in the feet when there is dysfunction or alteration. For example, central organs, like the spine, are reflected along the inner edge of both feet, while more lateral organs, such as the shoulder joints, are located at the extreme edges of the feet, specifically at the base of the little toes.

Organs on the right side of the body, such as the liver, gallbladder, and ascending colon, are reflected only in specific areas of the right foot. Similarly, organs on the left side of the body, such as the spleen and descending colon, are reflected only in the left foot.

The organs that are best reflected in the feet are those with greater sensory innervation, such as the skin, the urogenital system, the digestive tract, the biliary ducts, and the spine. These are also the organs that, when inflamed, tend to be very painful, such as the teeth, joints, and ears. More solid organs with less innervation, such as the liver and lungs, are more difficult to reflect.

Method and Duration of Massage

The organs of our body reflected in the feet—referred to as reflex areas—are located in the soft tissues, primarily on the sole. Some are also found in the longitudinal grooves of the instep, on the inner surface (lower abdomen), the inner edge (spinal column), and the outer edge (less sensitive areas).



As the treatment progresses, the sensitive areas of the feet gradually become less painful, which is accompanied by improvement in any disorders we may have, some of which may even disappear completely. Like any physiotherapeutic treatment, it is essential that the regulatory stimuli we provide are not sporadic, but continuous (approximately 2 to 3 times per week) over a certain period (usually 3 to 6 weeks). The massage for each point should last about half a minute, repeating cyclically throughout the session, which should last no less than fifteen minutes for each foot.

This approach ensures that the initial positive results achieved become truly stable.

During the course of the treatment, a series of reactions often occur, mostly related to elimination, which typically result in a rapid improvement in the condition being treated. These reactions should be properly assessed, and it is important not to panic unnecessarily. These reactions are crucial:

1. Improvement in sleep, which becomes deeper and more restorative.
2. Increased elimination of feces, often with a stronger odor, darker color, and altered consistency.
3. Increased urine output, frequently with a stronger odor, darker color, and greater urinary sediment.
4. Significant elimination of mucus from the nose or in the form of expectoration, often resembling nasobronchial congestion.
5. Profuse sweating without an apparent cause, especially at night, with a stronger odor than usual.
6. In many women, the elimination of vaginal discharge often subsides with the onset of menstruation.
7. At other times, the “discharge” is emotional in nature, with the patient experiencing tears and sobs, particularly in those who seek treatment for nervous tension or stress.



8. These secondary reactions to the treatment generally occur when the patient is at home, that is, between sessions. Reflexology should continue until the treated condition is completely resolved or if progress stagnates. However, the treatment should never be interrupted before the sixth session.



Fase de reposo.

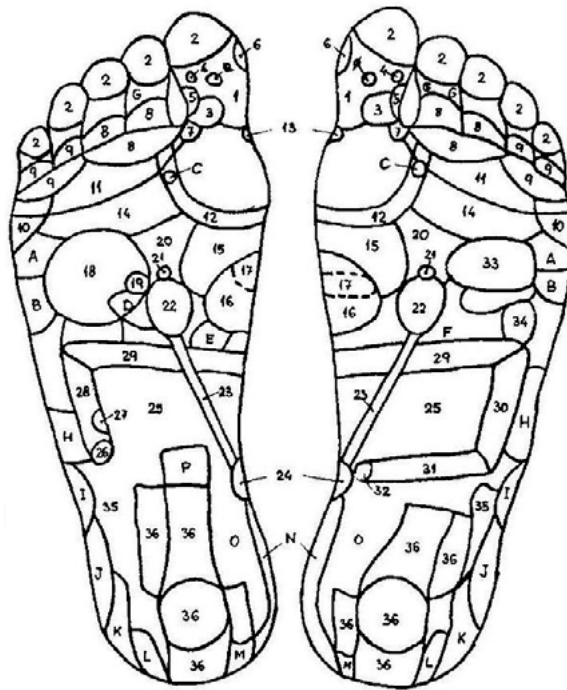
La yema del pulgar sólo se apoya sobre el punto que se desea presionar.

Fase de presión.
Con la punta del pulgar, el resto de los dedos sueltan el pie del paciente y la mano adopta forma de tenaza.

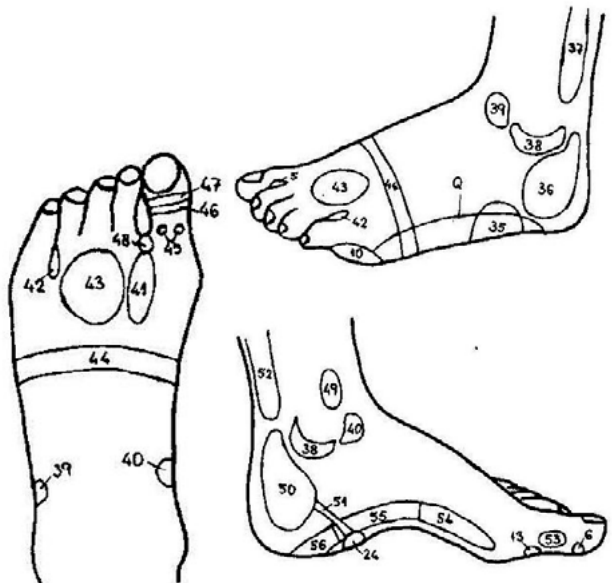


Reflex zones of the feet

- 0 Hypophysis (pituitary)
- 1 Head
- 2 Frontal sinuses
- 3 Brainstem, cerebellum
- 4 Epiphysis
- 5 Temple, trigeminal
- 6 Nose
- 7 Nape
- 8 Eyes
- 9 Ears
- 10 Shoulder
- 11 Trapezium
- 12 Thyroid
- 13 Parathyroid
- 14 Lungs, bronchus
- 15 Stomach
- 16 Duodenum
- 17 Pancreas
- 18 Liver
- 19 Gall bladder
- 20 Solar plexus
- 21 Suprarenal
- 22 Kidney
- 23 Ureter
- 24 Urinary bladder
- 25 Intestinum tenue
- 26 Appendix
- 27 Ileocecal valve
- 28 Ascending colon
- 29 colon transversum
- 30 Descending colon
- 31 Intestinum rectum
- 32 Anus
- 33 Heart and blood circulation
- 34 Spleen
- 35 Knee
- 36 Ovary, Fallopian tube/testicles
- 37 Underbelly
- 38 Hip
- 39 Lymph nodes (head, Thorax, armpits)
- 40 Lymph nodes (Abdomen)
- 41 Tanker lymphatic (Thorax, trachea)
- 42 Inner ear (balance)
- 43 Breast / Chest
- 44 Diaphragm
- 45 Tonsils
- 46 Maximal lower
- 47 Maximal top
- 48 Larynx, trachea
- 49 Anus
- 50 Uterus / Prostate
- 51 Vagina / Penis, urethra
- 52 Bowel straight Hemorrhoids
- 53 Cervical vertebrae
- 54 Thoracic vertebrae
- 55 Lumbar vertebrae
- 56 Sacral and cistigas



- A - Clavicle
- B - Sternum
- C - Thymus
- D - Pleura
- E - Childbirth"
- F - Ribs
- G - Mouth
- H - Llieco
- I - Thigh
- J - Knee
- K - Leg
- L - Feet
- M - Coccyx
- N - Sacro
- O - Hypogastric]
- P - iliacus
- Q - Siatic nerve





Healing Sounds¹⁷



Healing sounds are an Eastern traditional practice based on the control of breathing—inhalation and exhalation—and the emission of sounds that help balance the energy and function of the internal organs.

Research on sound vibrations and their effect on the body, mind, and spirit is grounded in the understanding that liquids are particularly receptive to sound waves. Given that approximately 60% of the human body is composed of liquids, the scientific community has embraced the concept that sound can be used as healing vibrational frequencies, as it helps reduce stress and strengthen the immune system.

The practice of healing sounds will, over time, reflect its benefits on the various emotions and organs involved. We invite you to practice this at the start of your day or before sleep.

Below, we share a sequence of steps for practicing healing sounds. These exercises consist of gentle movements that are easy to learn for anyone, regardless of age or health condition. At the end of this chapter, we provide a chart summarizing the different aspects of the body, emotions, energy, and sounds related to this exercise.

Development

The first step is to choose a space where you can remain comfortable and undistracted, preferably in silence. You can perform this exercise either standing or seated with your back straight. We recommend doing it in the morning or before going to bed.

Begin the practice with 5 minutes of deep, mindful breathing, focusing on your inhalation and exhalation. Inhale for a count of four, expanding the lower abdomen, allowing the air to enter deeper than the rib cage and fill the lungs with vitality. Hold the breath for two counts, then exhale slowly for a count of four, observing how your abdomen deflates like a balloon.

If you practice meditation or yoga, you can conclude your routine with the healing sounds.

Liver, Gallbladder

Take a deep breath and simultaneously raise your arms to your left side, keeping your eyes open.

Exhale while making the sound “Chsss,” imagining that the air you’re releasing is dark green, carrying away the emotions of “anger, rage, impatience, cruelty” from your liver and gallbladder. It’s important to keep your eyes open as you make the sound, as it helps to release the emotion.

After finishing the exhalation, lower your arms and place both hands on your liver, filling it with an emerald green light that brings kindness.

Repeat this movement 8 times.

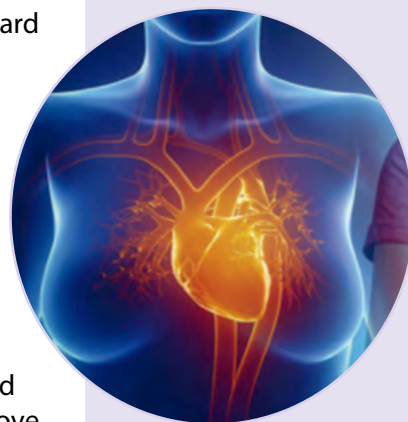
Heart, Small Intestine

Take a deep breath and simultaneously raise your arms toward your right side, keeping your eyes open.

Exhale while making the sound “Haa,” imagining that the air you’re releasing is a dark red—like coagulated blood—and that the emotions of “pride, arrogance, excessive euphoria” are disappearing from your heart and small intestine. It’s important to keep your eyes open while making the sound, as it helps release the emotion.

After finishing the exhalation, lower your arms, place one hand on your heart and the other on your small intestine, and imagine covering them with a bright red light that brings love and joy.

Repeat this movement 8 times.





Spleen, Pancreas, Stomach

Take a deep breath and simultaneously raise your arms, gently tapping with the fingertips just below the ribcage on the left side, keeping your eyes open and focusing on your deep breath.

Exhale while making the sound “Juu,” imagining that the air you’re releasing is dark yellow, and the feelings of “stress, anxiety, worry” are leaving your stomach and spleen-pancreas. Remember to keep your eyes open, as this helps release the emotion.

After finishing the exhalation, lower your arms, place one hand below the left ribcage and the other on your stomach, and visualize both organs being enveloped in a bright yellow light.

Repeat this movement 8 times.

Lungs, Large Intestine

Take a deep breath and, at the same time, raise your arms above your head, keeping your eyes open.

Exhale while making the sound “Ssss,” imagining that the air you’re releasing is gray like smoke, and that the feelings of “sadness, sorrow, melancholy” are dissipating from your lungs and large intestine. Remember to keep your eyes open, as it will help release the emotion.

At the end of the exhalation, lower your arms, and place one hand on your large intestine and the other just below the collarbone, about 10 centimeters above the breasts. Imagine covering both organs with a soft, light gray, and a sense of detachment.

Repeat this movement 8 times.



Kidneys, Bladder

Take a deep breath and, at the same time, gently tap the front of your closed fist in the kidney area, keeping your eyes open.

Exhale while making the sound “Woo,” imagining that the air you are releasing is dark blue, and the feeling of “fear and shock” is dissipating from your kidneys and bladder. Remember to keep your eyes open, as this will help release the emotion.

At the end of the exhalation, lower your arms, and place your hands on your kidney area, imagining these organs being covered with a bright turquoise blue and the sensation of gentle, soothing alertness.

Repeat this movement 8 times.

After completing the exercise sequence, take a few more minutes to breathe deeply and perceive the sense of tranquility and peace in your body and spirit.



Conclusion of the Exercise

Regular practice of these simple movements and healing sounds will teach you how to direct the flow of energy to the body's main organs and mobilize vital energy.

Some of the benefits you will gain from active meditation with healing sounds include relaxation, the release of stored tension and emotions in your body, and achieving deep, restorative sleep.

Being aware of your body means understanding it and providing care, with intention for healing, detoxification, and rejuvenation of each organ. Let the breath and sound vibrations serve as vehicles to release toxins and trapped emotions.

It is important to understand that a balanced diet will enhance the benefits of caring for your body, mind, and spirit. Below, we present a table summarizing the emotions associated with various organs and the sounds that can help them heal.

Healing Sounds Table

EMOTION	ORGAN AFFECTED	POSITIVE FEELING	COLOR AND SOUND	POSITION OF THE BODY
Anger, Rage, Cruelty, Impatience	Liver, Gallbladder	Generosity	Green Chsss	Arm towards the left
Pride, Solemnity Unbridled euphoria	Heart, Small intestine	Love Happiness Joy	Red Haa	Arms up right side
Worry, Anxiety, Stress	Spleen, Pancreas, Stomach	Impartiality Justice	Yellow Juu	Left side Tap fingers
Sadness, Shyness, Melancholy	Lungs, Large Intestine	Courage Detachment	Grey Ssss	Arms up Centre
Fear, Fright	Kidney, Bladder	Kindness Alert	Blue Wooo	Tap kidneys with fist



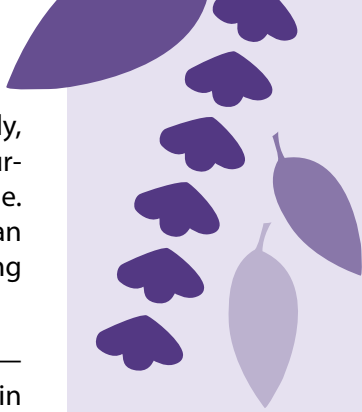
Tips for overcoming
insomnia: Practices
for restful sleep¹⁸



A recurring issue that concerns women defenders and activists is difficulty falling asleep or maintaining sleep, which leads to feelings of fatigue during the day, irritability, apathy, and a lack of energy. In today's turbulent times, marked by upheaval, change, and health crises, insomnia problems have increased as worries and uncertainty disrupt our emotions. This is why it is important to pay attention to our sleep habits and adopt measures that promote better rest, thus aiding in the restoration of our vital energy.

Here are some suggestions for improvement:

- 1 Aim to maintain a consistent sleep schedule, going to bed and waking up at the same time each day, including on weekends and during vacations. Frequent changes in sleep patterns can increase the likelihood of developing chronic sleep disturbances.
- 2 Spend enough time in bed to meet your actual sleep needs, but avoid exceeding them. Limiting time in bed can enhance sleep quality, whereas prolonged time in bed may lead to fragmented and shallow sleep.
- 3 If you have been in bed for 30 minutes without falling asleep, get up and, if possible, move to another room. Engage in a calming activity that does not overstimulate you, such as reading a magazine. Return to bed only when you feel drowsy. The goal is to reinforce the unconscious association between your bed and falling asleep quickly.
- 4 Avoid long naps and circumstances that encourage them. When necessary, a brief post-meal nap of no more than 30 minutes is recommended.
- 5 Avoid engaging in activities such as watching television, reading, listening to the radio, eating, talking on the phone, or having discussions while in bed. The brain needs to associate the bedroom and bed exclusively with sleep. When other activities take place in this space, the brain receives mixed signals, which can disrupt sleep patterns.

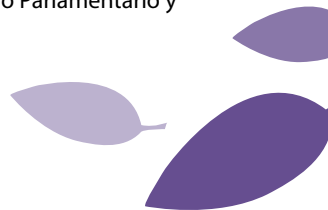
- 
- 6 Engage in light physical activity for at least one hour daily, preferably in natural sunlight and in the afternoon, ensuring it is completed at least three hours before bedtime. Intense exercise within three to four hours of sleep can stimulate the nervous system, potentially diminishing feelings of drowsiness and delaying sleep onset.
 - 7 Establish a consistent nightly routine—a sleep ritual—to mentally and physically prepare for rest. Engaging in habitual activities such as brushing your teeth, removing makeup, changing into sleepwear, or combing your hair signals to the body that it is time to unwind and transition into sleep.
 - 8 Practicing relaxation exercises before bed can enhance sleep quality. Engaging in slow, controlled breathing techniques can promote a state of calm. This guide includes a range of exercises designed to support relaxation and restful sleep.
 - 9 If possible, taking a bath at body temperature can have a relaxing effect, as it helps promote sleep.
 - 10 Beverages containing caffeine, such as sodas and coffee, consumed in the afternoon, can disrupt sleep even in individuals who don't consciously perceive the effects. Caffeine is a stimulant for the nervous system. While it does not cause physical addiction, it can lead to psychological dependence.
 - 11 Alcohol and tobacco negatively impact sleep, and therefore, their consumption should be avoided for several hours before bedtime. Alcohol is a depressant of the nervous system; although it may help initiate sleep, it can lead to awakenings throughout the night. Nicotine, on the other hand, is a stimulant of the nervous system, not a tranquilizer as often believed by smokers.
 - 12 Ensure that the space where you sleep maintains a comfortable temperature and minimal levels of light and

noise. Whenever possible, the bedroom should be a cozy, secure, and peaceful environment that encourages sleep.

- 13 Try to avoid going to bed until at least two hours after dinner. Hunger or heavy, rich meals can disrupt sleep.
- 14 If you wake up in the middle of the night, it's best not to eat anything, as doing so may lead to waking up at the same time each night feeling hungry.
- 15 Try to avoid excessive fluid intake late in the afternoon and evening, as this can help prevent the need to get up during the night to use the bathroom.
- 16 Avoid using the computer in the two hours leading up to bedtime, as the light emitted from the screen can increase your level of arousal.
- 17 Avoid sleeping near your phone, and never leave it on overnight. Having it within reach creates the temptation to check it, exposing you to the stimulating effects of lights, messages, and notifications, which can significantly disrupt sleep by triggering alertness.
- 18 Avoid self-medicating to sleep. Taking medication on your own can worsen the problem. Instead, consider trying herbal teas such as lemon balm, lavender, orange blossom, valerian, chamomile, linden, or passionflower. A cup of tea an hour before bed can help you relax and promote sleep.
- 19 Try to sleep in comfortable clothing that isn't tight or restrictive and doesn't irritate your skin. It is highly recommended to wear cotton fabric, as it is soft and unlikely to cause allergies or skin irritation.

NOTES

1. Created by Ana María Hernández Cárdenas from the Consorcio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad Oaxaca A.C.
2. Created by Itzel Guzmán Reséndiz from the Consorcio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad Oaxaca A.C. based on: Los Órganos del Cuerpo y su Relación con Las Emociones. <http://angelorapia.blogspot.com/> II Medicina Tradicional China: Importancia de la conservación del “Jing de Riñón”. https://youtu.be/tBpde7649_0 II Medicina Tradicional China - Li Ping: El Hígado. <https://youtu.be/1WAJDv3-r4A> II Medicina Tradicional China y Acupuntura: El pulmón. <https://youtu.be/CC4Xe6QpgLA>
3. Selected tools from Capacitar Internacional.
4. Adapted from the ‘Manual de Autocuidado’ by Movimiento de Mujeres Por la Paz “Visitación Padilla”, Spain, 2007
5. Adapted from the ‘Manual de Autocuidado’ by Movimiento de Mujeres Por la Paz “Visitación Padilla”, Spain, 2007
6. Adapted from Brain Gym materials and EFT/TFT (to correct energy flow) and capacitar.org
7. Adapted from Brain Gym materials and EFT/TFT (to correct energy flow); and capacitar.org
8. From Trauma: Sanación y Transformación; Patricia Mathes Cane, Capacitar International Inc, 2002.
9. From Trauma: Sanación y Transformación; Patricia Mathes Cane, Capacitar International Inc, 2002.
10. Created by Ana María Hernández Cárdenas from the Consorcio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad Oaxaca AC with information from the Biblioteca Digital de la Medicina Tradicional Mexicana de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
11. Teas recommended by Anisha Aiyappa, Lourdes and Soledad Rendón, therapists at Casa La Serena.
12. Vaporizations recommended by Eugenia Cárdenas Vásquez therapist at Casa La Serena e Itzel Guzmán Reséndiz de Consorcio for the Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad Oaxaca AC.
13. Baths recommended by Lourdes and Soledad Rendón, therapists at Casa La Serena.
14. Created by Ana María Hernández Cárdenas from the Consorcio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad Oaxaca AC.
15. Juices recommended by Anisha Aiyappa therapist from Casa La Serena and Itzel Guzmán Reséndiz de Consorcio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad Oaxaca AC.
16. Created by Ana María Hernández and Nallely Guadalupe Tello Méndez from the Consorcio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad Oaxaca AC, with information from the Centro Internacional de Capacitación en Salud Holística (CICSH) Oaxaca.
17. Created by Elida López Cornejo, therapist at Casa La Serena.
18. Created by Ana María Hernández Cárdenas from the Consorcio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad Oaxaca AC.





Altar designed by Deyanira Valdes de Villanueva in Casa La Serena



This guide with self-care and healing tools is yours! We invite you to explore it at your own pace, dedicating the time needed to engage with each suggested practice. Keep in mind that these are just a few among many existing tools, but if we practice them in a conscious and constant way, we will be able to benefit greatly.