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Chinese New Year: can ancient wellness techniques make you healthier and happier?



Is it possible to boost your energy with ancient wellness techniques? CREDIT: GETTY



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By Jessica Salter

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If your energy levels have taken a bit of post-January slump, you might want to try a dose of ancient healing.

It's Chinese New Year today and along with ushering in the year of the Pig, celebrations today will also herald a resurgence in interest among the wellness set in Chinese healing practices.

Last year we looked to India and the traditions and customs of Ayurvedic medicines - think wellness stars like Jasmine Hemsley promoting the benefits of Moon Mylk recipes and tongue scraping. But this year ancient Chinese wisdom is set to take centre stage with circulation boosting massages that claim to be better than Botox

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(whose celeb fans include Gwyneth Paltrow and reportedly, the Duchess of Sussex) jade stones to boost positive energy and a self-care ritual that helps us reset.



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"I love Chinese New Year, not least because suddenly everyone takes a moment to consider what Chinese wisdom can offer us," says Chinese practitioner Katie Brindle, and founder of [Hayo'u](#). "This year already I've noticed an unprecedented groundswell of curiosity in it."

Jenya Emets, founder of [Cloud Twelve](#), a luxury wellness and lifestyle club based in London, says there's been an increase in clients booking Chinese-based treatments, including acupuncture, craniosacral and herbal medical consultations, while the [SMA Wellness clinic](#) says that Moxibustion, a treatment from traditional Chinese medicine said to re-balance the body, is one of their most popular treatments.

According to Chinese medicine, Qi is the "vital energy" that runs through our body, and we need it to flow freely in order to experience good health. But, practitioners like Brindle and Emets say modern Western lifestyles disrupt our flow, as do our attempts to live healthily.

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"The wellness world has experimented with a lot of extreme diets, but it has eventually realised that a balanced approach is a more powerful one," says Emets. "For example, if you overload your diet with raw greens, you may end up with severe bloating and indigestion as our bodies are not designed to metabolise that much fibre. On the other hand, a nice ritual of a glass of wine to wind down from a busy day can play a powerful role in reducing stress, a precursor to most chronic conditions." Rather than being about deprivation, Chinese approach is about finding balance – the yin to the yang.

Brindle says Chinese treatments have long suffered from bad PR in the UK, with most people's awareness of the ancient customs being drawn from dodgy-looking high street shops selling even dodgier-looking tinctures: "In reality, a lot of Chinese medicine is based on preventative care. In the West, we take our good health for granted and systematically neglect wellness and disease prevention. Then when we are ill, we treat the symptoms of the disease rather than finding the root cause. Chinese medicine is about eliminating small health niggles and balancing the body to stay healthy so it doesn't turn into something more serious."



Acupuncture, a treatment derived from ancient Chinese medicine, can now be prescribed by GPs (CHRIS GETTY)

Brindle discovered Chinese medicine after a car accident that left her in constant pain, and later a series of health problems around fertility issues, weight, stress and fatigue. After exhausting conventional treatments, she was recommended a Chinese doctor. It was so life changing she started training in Chinese medicine herself in 2002.

She says she has seen most interest from clients in the practice of facial gua sha – a self-massage treatment using a jade stone to improve circulation that helps eliminate fine lines (from £38 for the Hayo'u facial tool).

The use of jade stone is something that is often used in Chinese medicine, according to Usha Q Arumugam, founder of Ushvani spa in west London, who has just launched a new Jade stone massage ritual. "Jade is believed to ease muscle tension, increase circulation and stimulate the lymphatic system," she says. "Jade also increases the flow of energy and in traditional Chinese medicine, this is believed to prevent a multitude of health issues and create a positive state of mind."



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