

Qi Balance

A Personalized, Balanced Diet

Diagnosis Specifics Ben Greenfield

Please follow the information about your constitution that is outlined in the other documents I've included. This document explains why you are in this constitutional category and also adds some other aspects that are specific to you. So you may need to add or subtract certain foods from your constitutional diet based on the specifics below.

Internal Environment:

Every chart is a reflection of an internal environment. In Taoist philosophy the microcosm is a reflection of the macrocosm. This description of a day, its natural components and its climate gives you a sense of your general internal environment.

This is an extreme winter environment like Tianchi Lake, on the border between North Korea and China. It is nighttime and the days have been very short and the temperatures very cold. The only elements here are water, which is frozen, and metal, which is like a mountain of rock outcroppings and boulders. There is a striking absence of vegetation, soil and heat.

Overall Energy Assessment: Range is Poor/Fair/Good/Excellent

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Stamina/endurance: | Excellent |
| Resilience/ability to recover: | Poor |
| Missing Elements: | Wood & Water |
| Blocked general energy: | Yes |
| Rough energy: | No |

General Comment About Stamina and Resilience

There is often a difference between a person's stamina and resilience. Stamina is how long someone can keep going and how intensely they can work or exercise. Resilience is a measure of how quickly someone recovers from illness or overwork, how quickly they bounce back.

Generally a person with all five elements will have better resilience than someone who is missing elements. They tend not to get sick and if they do, they tend to recover quickly and reestablish their inherent balance. However, they may not have great stamina and if they push themselves beyond their capacity they may indeed get ill. However, once they return to an appropriate activity level, they tend to recover.

People with lots of stamina can go and go. They can work long hours and run marathons. However, if they don't have good resilience and they push themselves too hard, they break. They tend to get seriously ill and not recover easily. Following the diet and exercise recommendations will improve this. However, they will always need to remember to be moderate in their energy expenditure and give time to rest and recover.

Additionally there are people who have neither great stamina nor great resilience but whose personality causes them to push beyond their limits. It is very important for people in this situation to follow the diet and exercise prescribed for them and to balance a drive that is not supported by physical constitution.

General Description of Blocked Energy

Blocked energy is mainly a physical issue but it does affect the emotions as well. People with blocked energy are missing elements. One missing element is common and not particularly difficult. The more elements that are missing the more blocked the energy. If those elements are in a row around the creation cycle of the Five Elements the block is stronger and harder to overcome. Also with missing elements in a row, a person tends not to self-reflect and can easily get off-track and quit following the diet. If you are missing an element before and after one of your elements, that element is not supported and not functioning well in the circulation of energy. Two things help relieve blocked energy.

1. Following the dietary recommendations
2. Exercise for one's constitutional type. Sometimes more full body exercise for So-eum (Lesser Yin) missing two or more elements in a row is recommended. This is because more energy is required to move through the block and the large muscles of the body are mostly in the lower body. (For instance, a so-eum person missing two elements in a row would do well to engage in both rowing and running, but should focus more time and energy on the upper body.)

Individual main organ analysis: **Moderate is ideal. Both weak and too strong energy indicate an imbalance in that organ.**

Stomach/Spleen: Extremely weak and cold. The only earth element you have in your chart is autumn earth, which actually adds even more energy to your already excess lung. You need to eat plenty of warming food. Specifically you should add lamb to your diet and more chicken and turkey. You would benefit from plenty of spices and the addition of garlic, onions and peppers to many of your meals. Avoid foods that are cooling in nature.

Lung: Very excessive and cold. This is where your stamina comes from but it creates a major imbalance for you. Every time you eat foods that strengthen the lung, it actually injures the functioning of the lung and colon, and decreases your resilience. It drains the heart, which is your weakest organ. It also over controls the liver, which is also weak. Eating warming foods will help your lung but you should strictly avoid foods that feed the lung directly, such as beef and cow dairy. Sheep and goat dairy are beneficial for you however. They are warming and benefit the earth element.

Kidney: Your kidneys are also excessively strong but the energy tends to stagnate and sink downward. This energy is also blocked. Thank goodness you are not sedentary. That would be very bad for you. However, you should concentrate more energy on upper body exercise like swimming and less on lower body exercise like biking. Full body exercise is helpful in moving blocked energy so running/hiking are fine. You should strictly avoid all cooling food. It's also best to eat vegetables cooked. Salads are not that great for you unless they are things like cooked beets with citrus dressing.

Liver: Your liver is weak. The energy is not flowing smoothly from the kidney to support the liver and the lung energy is over controlling the liver. Avoiding cooling and lung building foods will help your liver. But you should also add some liver building foods like olive oil and apple cider vinegar. (Grape vinegar is cooling and coconut vinegar strengthens the lung.) Your liver would probably benefit from using "olive leaf extract" as a supplement.

Heart: Your heart is your weakest organ. Not only are you missing fire, you are missing wood which supports fire, have too much water that damages fire and way too much metal which drains fire. Following the diet as prescribed will help your heart but I recommend that you protect your heart specifically by adding either alcohol, in medicinal quantities, or ginseng tea. If you drink alcohol, be sure it is not made with grapes or barley, so no beer, wine, scotch, vermouth etc. Cocktails like gin & tonic, bourbon & water or margaritas (no salt) would help your heart stay strong.

Other Comments

I've read The Low Carb Athlete and scanned Beyond Training and find your approach very reasonable. So I applaud you for that. You've obviously done a lot of study of Western nutrition and have come to a very rational approach. It is, in my limited experience, uncommon amongst endurance athletes. In that regard, you have been of great benefit to your constituents.

I agree that the vast majority of your nutrients should be coming from real food and I like that you are including meat in your diet. If you exchanged lamb for the beef and also chicken or turkey for the pork, you'd help yourself tremendously. There are a few other things that you might want to exchange too, so that you are substituting warming or neutral foods and eliminating cooling and lung building foods. An example is using chia seeds instead of flax. Chia is warming while flax is neutral and lung building. It's also great that you tend to avoid "energy bars", which in many cases are only slightly healthier than candy bars.

Generally your diet is very good from a Western perspective but the balance of your organs is extreme and requires some special considerations. I think you know this intuitively and have emphasized recovery, which is more crucial for you than for most people. You have also been wise in making your regular exercise routine more moderate than typical for endurance athletes so that you are only pushing yourself during a race or for a short time before the race. This along with tweaking your diet will save your life. It will also improve your performance.

Finally, it's important to note that these recommendations are for you specifically. As a matter of fact, they don't even apply to everyone in the so-eum category. People of your constitution can often eat lung-strengthening food. Some of them even **need** to eat these foods. However, for you, it is just as important to avoid foods that strengthen the lung as it is to avoid cooling foods. In addition, adding plenty of warming foods will improve your digestion, strengthen your heart, increase your resilience and protect your health long-term.

Personality

Generally we only report personality issues that may adversely affect your health. We cannot tell how much you have worked to resolve these issues through therapy or spiritual practices. However, our goal is to offer insight so that you may understand yourself better and offer ideas that could improve your health and happiness. Observing your personality without judgment can awaken the objective witness and lead to spiritual growth.

Your personality issue, besides the blocked energy, is that you have a break. This is described in general terms below. You also can be stubborn which, of course, makes you successful in your business and athletic ventures. But it doesn't always serve you. Practice responding to suggestions with "maybe". It will help you not have a knee-jerk respond to advice and give you time to consider whether the advice might or might not be appropriate for you.

Breaks

A break in the chart is a strong incompatibility between two characters in the chart. Breaks cause a person, on occasion, to be very emotionally intense and to stay in an emotional space for an extended period of time. When the break is active the person literally wants to break away from the person or situation that they feel is causing the emotional intensity.

For instance, if someone hurts their feelings or makes them angry they would tend to react very strongly and the reaction would last for days. Most people given the same situation would be less emotionally intense and might recover within hours rather than days.

Breaks can be very damaging to the physical energy when they are active so it's important to learn how to manage them. They can also create havoc with both professional and personal relationships.

There are really three things that one can do to manage the break. First the person needs to completely accept how they are feeling. If they are angry, then they should allow themselves to be angry without judgment or resistance. Of course, this is not permission to express anger in ways that are damaging to oneself and others. They just need to acknowledge the truth of how they feel. That also means not blaming oneself for being emotional.

Second, it is important not to feed the already intense emotions. If someone feels hurt, they don't need to dig up every time in the past that the person hurt their feelings, or every time their feelings have ever been hurt. Additionally, making oneself "bad" for negative emotions feeds the emotions rather than resolving them. It's good to refrain from making the situation more than it is.

Meditation is an excellent practice for creating some space between thoughts and emotions. It slows the mind down and calms the emotions. A practice of daily meditation will be very helpful to keep anyone on a more emotional even keel. If they are unable to meditate during intense emotional times, something as simple as breathing deeply or taking a walk can help return them to a more typical and relaxed emotional state.

Finally, it's very important not to break off or threaten to break off the relationship when in this intense state. One may indeed need to end a particular relationship but it's best to make that decision when calm and when one can evaluate the good and bad things about the relationship in a more rational manner. Counseling can be helpful to resolve emotional issues and to move through difficult times with balance and clarity.

These are some things that help someone work with a break in their chart.

1. Meditate regularly.
2. Take a walk to calm yourself.
3. Accept your emotions and don't fight them.
4. Don't feed your emotional intensity.
5. Counseling could be very helpful
6. Make no important decisions when you are upset.