

# Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Health Preservation Methods: A Comprehensive English Manual

## Preface 前言

Health preservation is an essential integral part of TCM traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) culture with a history of spanning thousands of years. Rooted in classics like texts such as *Huangdi Neijing* (Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon) and *Bencao Gangmu* (Compendium of Materia Medica), TCM health preservation focuses centers on the harmony between the human body and nature, emphasizing the principles of "preventing diseases before they occur" and "regulating onset" and "nurturing both body and spirit". This manual systematically introduces core TCM health preservation methods with accurate precise English translations, aiming to help readers understand and apply TCM wisdom in their daily lives.

中医养生是中华优秀传统文化的重要组成部分，拥有数千年的历史积淀。其理论体系源于《黄帝内经》《本草纲目》等经典典籍，核心要义在于追求人体与自然的和谐统一，倡导“未病先防”与“形神共养”的养生理念。本手册系统梳理中医养生的核心方式，并提供精准的英文译法，助力读者理解并在日常生活中践行中医养生智慧。

## Chapter 1: Fundamental Concepts of TCM Health Preservation 第一章 中医养生基础理念

### 1.1 Core Principles 核心原则

- Harmony with Yin and Yang 阴阳调和:** The basic law of TCM. All physiological activities of the human body depend on the balance of Yin and Yang. Health preservation methods should follow the changes of Yin and Yang in nature (e.g., nourishing Yang in spring and summer, nourishing Yin in autumn and winter).
- Yin-Yang Harmony 阴阳调和:** As the fundamental law of TCM, all physiological activities of the human body rely on the balance of Yin and Yang. Health preservation methods should align with the seasonal fluctuations of Yin and Yang in nature—for instance, nourishing Yang energy in spring and summer, and replenishing Yin

essence in autumn and winter.

- **Unity of Body and Spirit 形神合一**: TCM regards the body as the carrier of the spirit, and the spirit as the dominator of the body. Health preservation requires both physical conditioning and mental cultivation .
- **Unity of Body and Spirit 形神合一**: TCM views the body as the carrier of the spirit, while the spirit governs the body's functions. Health preservation thus requires both physical conditioning and mental cultivation to achieve holistic wellness.
- **Prevention First 未病先防**: The essence of TCM health preservation. It emphasizes intervening in the sub-healthy state ("pre-disease" in TCM) to avoid the occurrence of diseases .
- **Prevention First (Preventing Diseases Before Onset) 未病先防**: This is the essence of TCM health preservation. It emphasizes intervening during the sub-healthy state (referred to as "pre-disease" in TCM) to ward off the development of overt diseases.
- **Adaptation to Seasons 顺应四时**: Human health is closely related to seasonal changes. Health preservation measures should be adjusted according to spring, summer, autumn and winter .
- **Adapting to Seasons 顺应四时**: Human health is closely intertwined with seasonal changes. Therefore, health preservation measures should be adjusted accordingly to adapt to the cyclic shifts of spring, summer, autumn, and winter.

## 1.2 Key Terminology 核心术语

中文术语 Chinese Term	英文翻译 English Translation	简要释义 Brief Explanation
养生	Health Preservation / Regimen	A series of methods to maintain health, delay aging and prevent diseases .A set of practices aimed at maintaining health, slowing aging, and preventing diseases.
阴阳	Yin and Yang	The basic category of TCM to explain the opposing and unified relationship of things .A core concept in TCM used to explain the

		opposing yet complementary relationship of all things.
经络	Meridians and Collaterals	The passage for Qi and blood to circulate in the human body .The pathways through which Qi (vital energy) and blood circulate throughout the human body.
气血	Qi and Blood	The material basis for maintaining human life activities .The essential material foundation for sustaining all life activities in the human body.
未病	Pre-disease State	A sub-healthy state before the occurrence of obvious diseases .A sub-healthy state that precedes the manifestation of obvious disease symptoms.

## Chapter 2: Core TCM Health Preservation Methods 第二章 核心中医养生方式

### 2.1 Non-pharmaceutical Methods 非药物养生方式

#### 2.1.1 Five-Tone Therapy 五音疗法

**Definition 定义:** A therapeutic approach that regulates the functions of Zang-Fu organs by us(internal organs) by utilizing five different musical tones (Gong, Shang, Jiao, Zhi, Yu), each corresponding to one of the five major viscera (Spleen, Lung, Liver, Heart, Kidney) .

**Mechanism 机理:** TCM believes that different musical tones have different frequencies and can resonate with corresponding organs, thereby adjusting Qi and

blood circulation and soothing emotions. **Mechanism 机理:** According to TCM theory, different musical tones possess unique frequencies that can resonate with their corresponding Zang-Fu organs. This resonance helps regulate the circulation of Qi and blood while soothing emotional imbalances.

**Practical Application 实用应用:**

- Gong (Do): Corresponds to the Spleen, suitable for improving digestive function and relieving fatigue.
- Shang (Re): Corresponds to the Lung, helpful for relieving cough and regulating respiratory system.
- Jiao (Mi): Corresponds to the Liver, effective in soothing irritability and improving eyesight.
- Zhi (Sol): Corresponds to the Heart, good for calming the mind and relieving insomnia.
- Yu (La): Corresponds to the Kidney, suitable for enhancing kidney function and relieving low back pain.

**Note 注意事项:** Listen to the music at a moderate volume, 20-30 minutes each time, once or twice a day. **Note 注意事项:** Listen to the music at a moderate volume (40-60 decibels) for 20-30 minutes per session, once or twice daily. Avoid listening to overly loud music as it may disturb the balance of Qi.

## 2.1.2 Moxibustion 艾灸

**Definition 定义:** A therapeutic method that uses moxa wool made (processed from mugwort leaves) as the main primary material. When ignited, it is used to fumigate and warm specific acupoints or parts of the human body, and achieve health preservation effects through the dual combined action of warm thermal stimulation and the medicinal properties of mugwort.

**Mechanism 机理:** The warm stimulation of moxibustion can stimulate meridians and acupoints, promote Qi and blood circulation, adjust the functions of Zang-Fu organs, and enhance the body's resistance. **Mechanism 机理:** The thermal stimulation from moxibustion activates meridians and acupoints, enhances the circulation of Qi and blood, regulates the functions of Zang-Fu organs, and strengthens the body's resistance to pathogens.

**Common Acupoints 常用穴位:**

- Zusanli (ST36): Located 3 inches below the knee cap, beneficial for strengthening the spleen and stomach.
- Zusanli (ST36): Located 3 cun (a TCM measurement unit, approximately the width of four fingers) below the knee cap, on the outer side of the lower leg. It is beneficial for strengthening the spleen and stomach.

- Sanyinjiao (SP6): Located 3 inches above the inner ankle, good for regulating gynecological diseases and nourishing blood.
- Sanyinjiao (SP6): Located 3 cun above the inner ankle, on the inner side of the lower leg. It is effective for regulating gynecological conditions and nourishing blood.
- Yongquan (KI1): Located at the bottom of the foot, effective in nourishing the kidney and calming the mind.

**Practical Application 实用应用:** Use indirect moxibustion for beginners (place ginger or garlic slices between moxa cone and skin), 10-15 minutes each time, 2-3 times a week. **Practical Application 实用应用:** Beginners are advised to use indirect moxibustion—place a slice of ginger or garlic between the moxa cone and the skin to reduce burning sensation. Each session lasts 10-15 minutes, and it is recommended to practice 2-3 times a week.

**Note 注意事项:** Avoid moxibustion on the face, eyes and other sensitive parts; people with fever or inflammation should not use it. **Note 注意事项:** Avoid moxibustion on sensitive areas such as the face and eyes. Individuals with acute fever, inflammation, or skin lesions should refrain from using this method. Pregnant women should avoid moxibustion on the lower abdomen and lumbosacral region.

## 2.1.3 Movement Regimen 运动养生

**Definition 定义:** A health preservation method that regulates both the body and mind through gentle and, rhythmic movements, emphasizing the combination of movement and stillness, dynamic activity and static meditation.

**Representative Methods 代表方式:**

- **Baduanjin (Eight-Section Brocade) 八段锦:** It consists of eight sets of movements, each corresponding to different meridians and organs. For example, "Lifting the Hands to Regulate the Triple Burner" can promote the circulation of Qi in the whole body.
- **Baduanjin (Eight-Section Brocade) 八段锦:** Consists of eight sets of movements, each targeting different meridians and organs. For example, the movement "Lifting Hands to Regulate the Triple Burner" promotes the circulation of Qi throughout the entire body.
- **Taijiquan (Tai Chi) 太极拳:** Characterized by slow, gentle and coherent movements, it can improve balance ability, regulate breathing and soothe the mind.
- **Wuqinxi (Five-Animal Games) 五禽戏:** Imitates the movements of tigers, deer, bears, apes and birds, which can strengthen muscles and bones and regulate emotions.

**Practical Application 实用应用:** Practice for 20-30 minutes every morning or evening, with moderate intensity (slight sweating is appropriate). **Practical Application 实用应用:** Practice for 20-30 minutes each morning or evening. The

intensity should be moderate—slight sweating is a good indicator of appropriate exertion. Avoid practicing immediately after meals or when feeling fatigued.

## 2.1.4 Emotional Regulation 情志调摄

**Definition 定义:** A method of maintaining health by regulating emotions (joy, anger, worry, thought, sadness, fear, shock) to avoid emotional damage to Zang-Fu organs .**Definition 定义:** A health preservation method that maintains wellness by regulating seven emotions (joy, anger, anxiety, contemplation, sadness, fear, shock) to prevent emotional distress from damaging the Zang-Fu organs.

**Mechanism 机理:** TCM believes that "anger injures the Liver, joy injures the Heart, thought injures the Spleen, sadness injures the Lung, fear injures the Kidney". Stable emotions can maintain the balance of Qi and blood.**Mechanism 机理:** TCM holds that "anger impairs the Liver, joy impairs the Heart, contemplation impairs the Spleen, sadness impairs the Lung, and fear impairs the Kidney". Maintaining emotional stability is therefore crucial for preserving the balance of Qi and blood.

**Practical Application 实用应用:**

- Cultivate hobbies such as calligraphy, painting or gardening to soothe the mind.
- Communicate more with family and friends to release negative emotions.
- Listen to gentle music or practice meditation to calm the mind .

## 2.1.5 Aromatherapy with TCM 芳香养生

**Definition 定义:** A non-pharmaceutical health preservation method that uses the natural aroma of traditional Chinese medicinal materials to soothe emotions, regulate Qi and blood, and maintain health through olfactory stimulation and transdermal absorption .

**Mechanism 机理:** TCM believes that "aroma enters the Lung meridian first"—the volatile oil of Chinese medicinal materials can stimulate the olfactory nerve, regulate the nervous system, and at the same time penetrate the skin to promote Qi and blood circulation, achieving the effect of regulating the body and mind.

**Representative Methods 代表方式:**

- **TCM Sachet 中药香囊:** Made of dried Chinese medicinal materials with aromatic properties. Common ingredients include Peilan (Eupatorium fortunei), Huoxiang (Agastache rugosa), Bohe (Mentha haplocalyx), Muxiang (Aucklandia lappa) and Aiye (Artemisia argyi). These ingredients have the effects of repelling insects, refreshing the mind, and regulating Qi. It can be hung in the bedroom, living room or carried with you. For the elderly, sachets with Aiye and Cangzhu (Atractylodes lancea) can warm the meridians and dispel cold; for office workers, sachets with Peilan and Bohe can relieve fatigue and refresh the mind.

- **Combined Fragrance Comb 合香梳:** A comb made by mixing aromatic Chinese medicinal materials (such as sandalwood, agarwood, Chuanxiong (Ligusticum chuanxiong), Baizhi (Angelica dahurica)) with natural materials (such as boxwood, jujube wood). When combing the hair, the aroma of the medicinal materials is released, which can stimulate the acupoints on the head (such as Baihui, Fengchi) and promote head blood circulation. It has the effects of improving sleep, relieving headache and nourishing hair. It is recommended to comb the hair 1-2 times a day, 5-10 minutes each time, combing from the front hairline to the back of the head.

**Practical Application 实用应用:**

- Replace the sachet ingredients every 1-2 months to ensure the aroma and efficacy; avoid placing sachets in damp places to prevent mildew.
- Clean the combined fragrance comb with a dry cloth after use; avoid soaking it in water for a long time to protect the medicinal fragrance.

**Note 注意事项:** People with allergies should first test the medicinal materials on the inside of the wrist; pregnant women and infants should choose mild ingredients (such as sandalwood, lavender) and consult a TCM doctor before use.

## 2.1.6 Regular Daily Life 起居有常

**Definition 定义:** A health preservation method that maintains health by arranging work, rest, sleep and living environment in a regular and reasonable way. **Definition 定义:** A health preservation method that maintains wellness through regular and reasonable arrangement of work, rest, sleep, and living environment.

**Practical Application 实用应用:**

- Work and rest regularly: Go to bed before 11 pm (Zishi) and get up early in the morning, and take a nap for 20-30 minutes at noon (Wushi) .
- Regular work and rest: Go to bed before 11 pm (Zishi, the time when Yin is most abundant and Yang begins to grow) and get up early in the morning. Take a 20-30 minute nap at noon (Wushi, when Yang is most vigorous) to replenish energy.
- Moderate work and rest: Avoid prolonged sitting, standing or watching to prevent "long sitting injures the muscles, long standing injures the bones, long watching injures the blood" .
- Balanced work and rest: Avoid prolonged sitting, standing, or eye strain to prevent the TCM syndromes of "prolonged sitting injuring the muscles, prolonged standing injuring the bones, and prolonged eye use injuring the blood".
- Living environment: Keep the room ventilated and dry, and adjust the living habits according to seasons (e.g., keep warm in winter, cool in summer) .
- Foot bath: Soak feet in warm water for 15-20 minutes before going to bed, which can promote blood circulation and improve sleep quality .
- Foot bath: Soak feet in warm water (40-45°C) for 15-20 minutes before bed. Add

mugwort leaves or ginger slices in winter to enhance warmth. This promotes blood circulation and improves sleep quality.

## 2.2 Pharmaceutical & Dietary Methods 药食养生方式

### 2.2.1 Medicine-Food Homology 药食同源

**Definition 定义:** A TCM concept that some foods have both nutritional and medicinal values—they can be used as food to satisfy hunger when people are hungry, and as medicine to treat diseases when people are ill. **Definition 定义:** A core TCM concept referring to substances that possess both nutritional and medicinal values—they can serve as food to satisfy hunger when one is hungry, and as therapeutic agents to treat diseases when one is ill.

**Core Principle 核心原则:** "Treating diseases through diet"—regulating the body's constitution and preventing diseases by reasonably eating/consuming these medicinal food substances.

**Common Medicine-Food Ingredients 常用药食同源食材:**

Ingredient 食材	Efficacy 功效	Application 应用
Goji Berry 枸杞	Nourishes the Liver and Kidney, and improves eyesight	Soak in water, add to porridge or cook with chicken
Chrysanthemum 菊花	Clears heat, soothes the Liver, and improves eyesight	Make tea, suitable for people with dry eyes
Ginger 生姜	Warms the middle energizer, (digestive system) and dispels cold	Boil water, add to dishes, suitable for colds
Lotus Seed 莲子	Nourish the Heart, soothe the mind, strengthen the spleen Nourishes the Heart, calms the mind, and strengthens the Spleen	Cook porridge or soup, suitable for insomnia
Peppermint 薄荷	Clears heat, and refreshes the mind	Make tea, suitable for summer heat

**Note 注意事项:** Choose ingredients according to personal constitution (e.g., cold-



natured ingredients like chrysanthemum are not suitable for people with cold stomach). **Note 注意事项:** Select ingredients based on individual constitution. For example, cold-natured ingredients like chrysanthemum are unsuitable for those with cold stomachs, while warm-natured ingredients like ginger should be used sparingly by those with heat constitution.

## 2.2.2 Medicinal Diet 药膳

**Definition 定义:** A special food made by combining traditional Chinese medicines with food ingredients under the guidance of TCM theory, which has the functions of nourishing the body and preventing diseases. **Definition 定义:** A specialized type of food prepared by combining TCM herbs with edible ingredients under the guidance of TCM theory, which serves both nourishing and disease-preventing functions.

**Representative Medicinal Diets 代表药膳:**

- **Lotus Seed and Lily Porridge 莲子百合粥:** Ingredients include lotus seed, lily and rice. Efficacy: Nourish the Heart and soothe the mind, suitable for people with insomnia and anxiety.
- **Lotus Seed and Lily Porridge 莲子百合粥:** Ingredients include lotus seeds, lily bulbs, and rice. Efficacy: Nourishes the Heart, calms the mind, and relieves anxiety—suitable for individuals with insomnia and restlessness.
- **Mutton and Ginger Soup 生姜羊肉汤:** Ingredients include mutton, ginger and Chinese angelica. Efficacy: Warm the Kidney and Yang, dispel cold, suitable for winter health preservation.
- **Mutton and Ginger Soup 生姜羊肉汤:** Ingredients include mutton, ginger, and Danggui (Angelica sinensis). Efficacy: Warms the Kidney and invigorates Yang, dispels cold—ideal for winter health preservation.
- **Wolfberry and Chinese Yam Porridge 枸杞山药粥:** Ingredients include wolfberry, Chinese yam and rice. Efficacy: Strengthen the spleen and kidney, suitable for people with weak spleen and stomach.
- **Wolfberry and Chinese Yam Porridge 枸杞山药粥:** Ingredients include wolfberries (Goji berries), Chinese yam (Dioscorea opposita), and rice. Efficacy: Strengthens the Spleen and Kidney—suitable for individuals with weak digestive function.

## Chapter 3: Seasonal Health Preservation Guide

### 第三章 四季养生指南

TCM emphasizes "following aligning with the laws of Yin and Yang"—health preservation methods should be adjusted according to seasonal changes to adapt to the growth and declineebb and flow of natural Qi (vital energy).

Season 季节	Key Principle 核心原则	Recommended Methods 推荐方式
Spring 春季	Nourish Yang Qi, promote hair growth	<p>1. Diet: Eat more spring onions, leeks and other Yang-nourishing foods; 2. Movement: Practice Baduanjin to stretch the body; 3. Emotion: Keep a happy mood to help Yang Qi grow .1. Diet: Consume more Yang-nourishing foods such as spring onions and leeks; 2. Movement: Practice Baduanjin to stretch the body and promote Qi circulation; 3. Emotion: Maintain a cheerful mood to facilitate the ascension of Yang energy in spring.</p>
Summer 夏季	Clear heat and relieve summer heat, promote dampness	<p>1. Diet: Eat mung beans, watermelons and other heat-clearing foods; 2. Living: Avoid staying in air-conditioned rooms for a long time; 3. Health care: Moxibustion on Zusanli to strengthen the spleen .1. Diet: Eat heat-clearing and dampness-resolving foods such as mung beans and watermelons; 2. Living: Avoid prolonged stays in air-conditioned rooms to prevent cold-damp invasion; 3. Health care: Moxibustion at Zusanli to strengthen the Spleen and resolve dampness.</p>
Autumn 秋季	Nourish Yin, moisten	1. Diet: Eat lily, white

	dryness	<p>fungus and other Yin-nourishing foods; 2. Living: Keep warm in the morning and evening, avoid catching cold; 3. Emotion: Avoid sadness, keep the mind calm .1. Diet: Consume Yin-nourishing and dryness-moistening foods such as lily bulbs and white</p> <p>fungus; 2. Living: Keep warm in the morning and evening to avoid catching autumn cold; 3. Emotion: Avoid excessive sadness to preserve Lung Qi, as TCM links the Lung to autumn.</p>
Winter 冬季	Nourish Yin and store Yang	<p>1. Diet: Eat mutton, walnuts and other warm foods; 2. Living: Go to bed early and get up late, keep warm; 3. Health care: Soak feet with mugwort leaves to nourish Yang .1. Diet: Eat warm and Yang-nourishing foods such as mutton and walnuts; 2. Living: Go to bed early and get up late to conserve Yang energy, and keep the body warm, especially the neck and feet; 3. Health care: Soak feet with mugwort leaves to warm meridians and nourish Yang.</p>

## Chapter 4: FAQ 常见问题解答

## **4.1 Can TCM health preservation methods replace Western medicine treatment? 中医养生方式可以替代西医治疗吗？**

No. TCM health preservation focuses on "preventing diseases before they occur" and "recovering after diseases", which is a complementary way to medical treatment. If you have obvious diseases, you should seek medical treatment in time and follow the doctor's advice. No. TCM health preservation focuses on "preventing diseases before their onset" and "aiding recovery after illness", serving as a complementary approach to conventional medical treatment. If obvious disease symptoms occur, one should seek medical attention promptly and follow professional medical advice.

不可以。中医养生侧重于“未病先防”和“病后康复”，是正规医疗治疗的补充方式手段。若出现明显疾病症状，应及时就医并遵医嘱 循专业医师的指导。

## **4.2 Are TCM health preservation methods suitable for everyone? 中医养生方式适合所有人吗？**

No. TCM emphasizes "individualized health preservation based on syndrome differentiation". Methods should be adjusted according to personal one's constitution (cold, heat, deficiency, excessive), age, and health status. For example, people individuals with heat constitution should avoid excessive warm consumption of warm-natured foods like mutton .

不适合。中医强调“辨证施养”，需根据个人体质（寒、热、虚、实）、年龄和健康状况调整养生方式。例如，热性体质者应避免过多量食用羊肉等温热性食材。

## **4.3 How long does it take to see the effect of TCM health preservation? 中医养生需要多久才能看到效果？**

TCM health preservation is a long-term process that focuses on gradual adjustment. Generally, if you insist on scientific methods for 1-3 months, you can feel improvements in sleep, appetite and mental state. Long-term persistence is the key. TCM health preservation is a long-term process focusing on gradual adjustment rather than immediate effects. Generally, consistent practice of scientific methods for 1-3 months can lead to improvements in sleep quality, appetite, and mental state. Long-term adherence is key to achieving optimal results.

中医养生是注重循序渐进的长期过程。一般，而非追求立竿见影的效果。一般而言，坚持科学的养生方法 1-3 个月，可感受到睡眠、食欲、精神状态等方面的改善，长期坚持是达到理想效果的关键。

## **Appendix: English-Chinese Glossary of TCM**

## Health Preservation 附录 中医养生英汉词汇表

- Acupoint 穴位
- Moxa Wool 艾绒
- Meridian 经络
- Zang-Fu Organs 脏腑
- Qi and Blood 气血
- Yin and Yang 阴阳
- Medicinal Diet 药膳
- Five-Tone Therapy 五音疗法
- Baduanjin (Eight-Section Brocade) 八段锦
- Taijiquan (Tai Chi) 太极拳
- Medicine-Food Homology 药食同源
- Pre-disease Prevention 未病先防
- Acupoint 穴位
- Moxa Wool 艾绒
- Meridian 经络
- Zang-Fu Organs 脏腑
- Qi and Blood 气血
- Yin and Yang 阴阳
- Medicinal Diet 药膳
- Five-Tone Therapy 五音疗法
- Baduanjin (Eight-Section Brocade) 八段锦
- Taijiquan (Tai Chi) 太极拳
- Medicine-Food Homology 药食同源
- Pre-disease Prevention 未病先防
- Qi (Vital Energy) 气
- Syndrome Differentiation 辨证
- Meridian Tropism 归经