The Five Systems of the Balance Method
By Richard Tan, L.Ac., O.M.D.

The Five Systems of the Balance Method provide the meridian connections that are used to systematically choose which channel(s) should be treated. The Five Systems achieve a dynamic balance by pairing a sick meridian with various balancing meridians that are pre-arranged in each particular system. These five relationships among the twelve channels include attributes of the meridian such as organ specification, yin or yang quality, anatomical location, Chinese clock positions, and hand or foot association. The Chinese meridian names are essential to distinguish channel relationship in the Balance method: Tai Yin, Jue Yin, Shao Yin, Yang Ming, Shao Yang, and Tai Yang.

System 1 pairs channels sharing the same meridian name, such as Hand and Foot Tai Yin. System 2 pairs opposite channels according to the Chinese meridian names, such as Hand Tai Yin with Foot Tai Yang. System 3 pairs organs that share the familiar zang-fu relationships, such as Hand Tai Yin (Lung) with Hand Yang Ming (Large Intestine). System 4 pairs opposite meridians on the Chinese clock, such as Foot Tai Yin with Hand Shao Yang. Lastly, System 5 pairs neighbors on the Chinese clock, such as Foot Tai Yin with Hand Shao Yin. Balance is achieved by combining the affected meridian with the appropriate channels according to the specifications of each system.

Precise determination of the sick meridian is vital to achieve successful results using the Balance method. Ask the patient to pinpoint or trace the problem area with one finger in order to locate the specific channel(s) affected. For example, a sprained wrist could involve one or more of six meridians: Hand Tai Yin, Hand Jue Yin, Hand Shao Yin, Hand Yang Ming, Hand Shao Yang, and Hand Tai Yang. When the affected area is between channels, the treatment of choice would be between the balancing channels. For example, in System 1, wrist pain between Hand Yang Ming and Hand Shao Yang can be treated at an ashi area on the opposite ankle between Foot Yang Ming and Foot Shao Yang.

Each system contains a well-organized format to determine channel relationships; Systems 1, 2, and 3 are based on I-Ching theory, while the Chinese clock is the framework for Systems 4 and 5. In this text, the presence of the Five Systems facilitates understanding for the use of the Twelve Points Strategy.
System 1 Example:
(Needle: Opposite Side)

A patient presents with left-sided tennis elbow on Hang Yang Ming (Large Intestine) in the area of Quchi (LI 11). The needled meridian is Foot Yang Ming (Stomach) on the right side. Point selection is accomplished by using the Mirroring Format, as discussed in a later section. Dubi (ST 35), or an ashi point near Dubi (ST 35), would be the appropriate knee point to treat this elbow pain.

System 2 Example:
(Needle: Either Side)

A patient presents with a sprained ankle on Foot Shao Yang at Qiu\textsuperscript{xu} (GB 40) on the right side. The needled meridian is the Hand Shao Yin. The appropriate point to use is Shenmen (HT 7) on the right or left side. Needle the side that is more ashi.

System 3 Example:
(Needle: Opposite Side)

A patient presents with left-sided knee pain on the Foot Jue Yin channel at Ququan (LR 8). The needled meridian is Foot Shao Yang on the right side. The appropriate point is Yanglingquan (GB 34) using the Mirroring format.

System 4 Example:
(Needle: Either Side)

A patient presents with pain along the Hand Tai Yang (Small Intestine) channel at Bingfeng (SI 12) – Jianwaishu (SI 14) on the left scapula. The needled meridian is Foot Jue Yin (Liver) channel on the left side or the right side. Using the Imaging Format, the appropriate point is around Zhongfeng (LR 4) – Ligou (LR 5).

System 5 Example:
(Needle: Opposite Side)

Patient presents with headache along the Foot Shao Yang (Gallbladder) channel at Shuaigu (GB 8). The needled meridian is Hand Shao Yang, the San Jiao meridian. The appropriate point to needles is Tianjing (SJ 10) using the Imaging Format.

This article was taken out of Dr. Tan’s book Dr. Tan’s Strategy of Twelve Magical Points. To order a copy, click here.
About the Author

Dr. Richard Tan is a leading authority in acupuncture, herbs, feng shui and qi cultivation. His skills represent the culmination of years of study in the disciplines of Zang-Fu, Five Element and Channel Theory. Dr. Tan authored *Twelve in Acupuncture, Twenty-Four More in Acupuncture, Dr. Tan’s Strategy of Twelve Magical Points*, and *Acupuncture 1,2,3*, among others.

To learn more about Dr. Tan’s Balance Method, he is speaking on the following topic for Lotus Institute. Courses are approved for 8 units by CA, NCCAOM, FL, IL, TX, and CTCMA.

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