

## THE ROLE OF QI, BLOOD, AND FLUIDS IN THE BODY

The spleen, kidneys, lungs, heart, and liver are responsible for transforming Qi in the body, and for distributing and regulating its flow in the meridians (see pages 18–19). These five organs are nourished and moistened by the body's blood and fluids, both of which also contain Qi.

### KIDNEYS

*The kidneys store the body's Congenital Qi, which stems directly from the Essence of Life or Jing. Congenital Qi is inherited genetically from one's parents and is generally of fixed quantity and quality from birth. It diminishes over the course of one's life. Because it is difficult to replenish the levels of Congenital Qi in the body, care should be taken to conserve them. Avoid overindulgence in drink, food, or sex, or the problems created by excessive work.*

### BODILY FLUIDS

*Bodily fluids, such as saliva, digestive juices, sweat, and spinal fluids, are also influenced by the nutrients in food and drink and levels of Qi. "Clean" fluids are transported to the lungs and then dispersed around the body. They provide moisture, lubrication, and nourishment. "Dirty" fluids are excreted by the bladder and bowels.*

### LUNGS

*The amount of Qi to be found in the lungs depends upon the cleanliness of the air and the amount of oxygen brought into the lungs. A low quantity of Qi in the lungs can contribute to colds and viral disorders, poor circulation, and tiredness. City dwellers and those working regularly in stuffy environments are particularly prone to an insufficiency of Qi in the lungs, which breathing exercises and relaxation techniques will help to redress.*

### SPLEEN

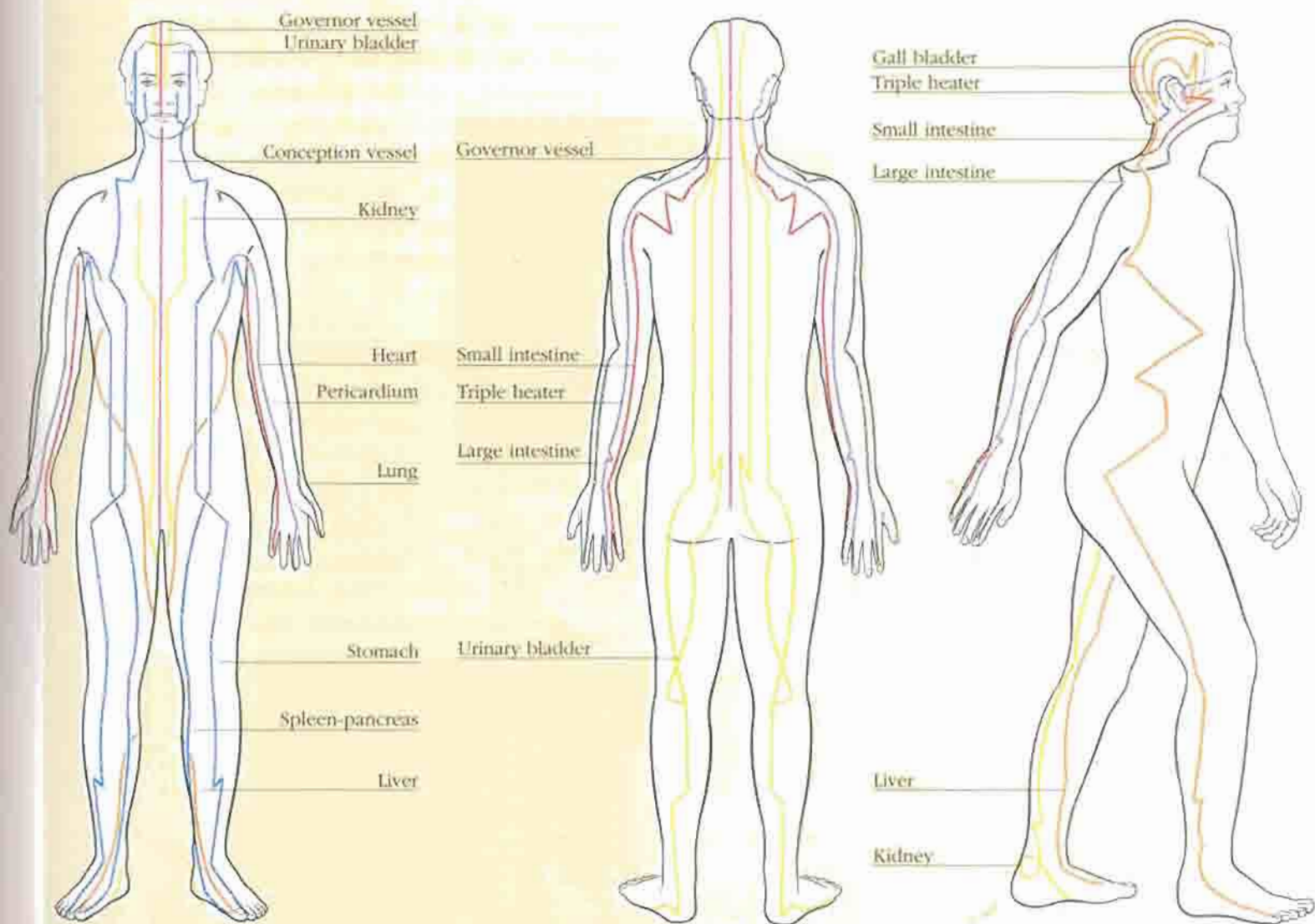
*In Chinese medicine the spleen holds a position of great importance and plays an essential role in many vital functions, including digestion, menstruation, and even mood control. The health of the spleen and stomach depends upon the quality of food a person consumes and their eating habits. If the food is rich in Qi, then digestion will be good, and this will promote the health of the five organs.*

### BLOOD

*Blood contains Nutritive and Congenital Qi. The two are combined in the heart, which then circulates the blood. The liver is also important, as it acts as a store for the blood when the body is resting. Blood nourishes the growth and renewal of organs and tissues. It also helps the heart to house the mind and consciousness.*



# THE MERIDIAN NETWORK

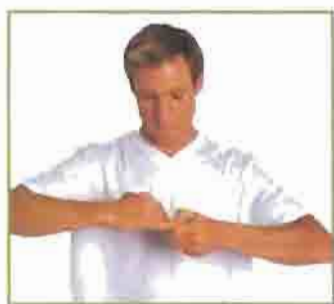
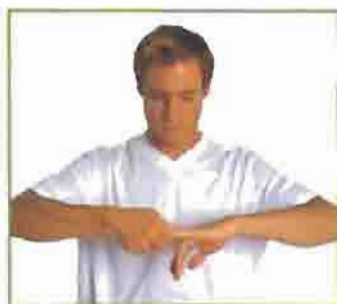


Each meridian has a channel on either side of the body. The meridians function in pairs of one Yang and one Yin meridian (see right). Yang energy comes from the Sun and flows from the fingers down the face and body. Yang meridians are the large intestine, stomach, small intestine, bladder, triple heater, and gall bladder. The Qi in the Yin meridians flows from the Earth up the body and face to the fingertips. Yin meridians are the lung, spleen, heart, kidney, pericardium, and liver. The governor and conception vessels are single-channeled reservoirs of energy.

- Lung meridian → █ Large intestine meridian → █
- Stomach meridian → █ Spleen-pancreas meridian → █
- Heart meridian → █ Small intestine meridian → █
- Urinary bladder meridian → █ Kidney meridian → █
- Pericardium meridian → █ Triple heater meridian → █
- Gall bladder meridian → █ Liver meridian → █
  
- Governor vessel █ Conception vessel █

## SHIATSU FINGER MASSAGE

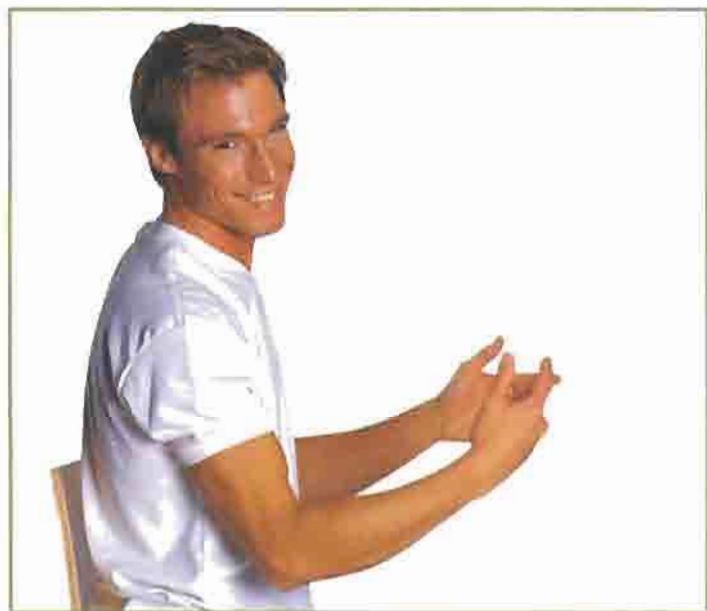
Our fingers are highly sensitive and, if massaged, can help to relieve tension or stress throughout our bodies. By applying Shiatsu along each of the fingers and stimulating the acupoints in the fingertips, the flow of Ki in their corresponding meridians is improved. This finger massage should be done sitting comfortably, with your shoulders and neck relaxed so that you can breathe freely. Your elbows should be raised so that your forearms form a straight line across your chest.



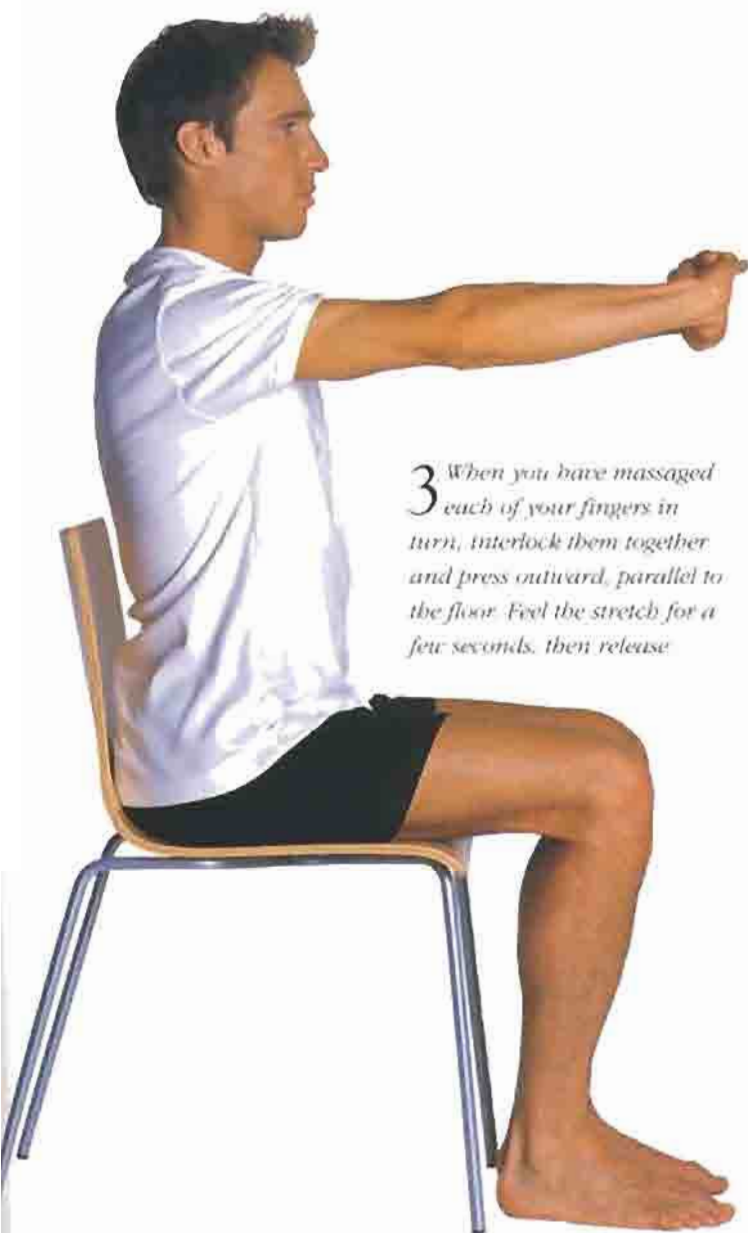
**1** With your left palm face down, grasp the base of your left little finger between the thumb (flat on top of finger) and index finger (bent beneath finger) of your right hand. Squeeze along the little finger to the tip, while exerting an opposing force by pulling away slightly with the left arm.

**2** At the fingertip carry on supporting with your index finger and apply pressure to the nail bed using the thumb. Repeat the procedure for each of the fingers in turn, moving from the little finger to the thumb, and then do the same for the opposite hand, starting with the little finger.

**3** When you have massaged each of your fingers in turn, interlock them together and press outward, parallel to the floor. Feel the stretch for a few seconds, then release.



**4** Shake your wrists freely with the fingers loose. Now rest your hands on your lap, close your eyes, and focus on the pleasant tingling sensation in your fingers, hands, and arms. You should feel an increase of heat and energy in these areas.



## BASIC MASSAGE STROKES

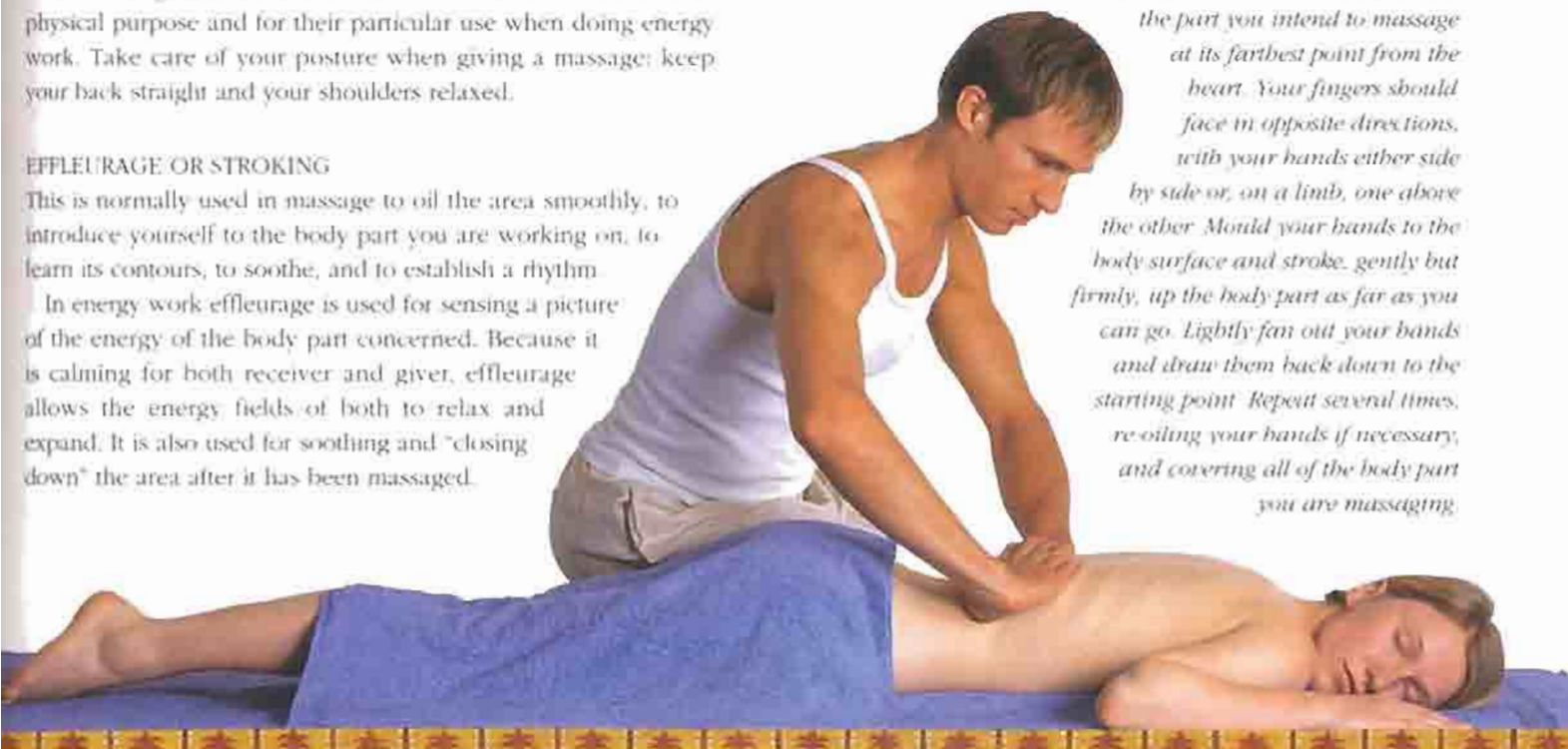
The following basic strokes are described both in terms of their physical purpose and for their particular use when doing energy work. Take care of your posture when giving a massage; keep your back straight and your shoulders relaxed.

### EFFLEURAGE OR STROKING

This is normally used in massage to oil the area smoothly, to introduce yourself to the body part you are working on, to learn its contours, to soothe, and to establish a rhythm.

In energy work effleurage is used for sensing a picture of the energy of the body part concerned. Because it is calming for both receiver and giver, effleurage allows the energy fields of both to relax and expand. It is also used for soothing and "closing down" the area after it has been massaged.

*Oil your hands and put them on the part you intend to massage at its farthest point from the heart. Your fingers should face in opposite directions, with your hands either side by side or, on a limb, one above the other. Mould your hands to the body surface and stroke, gently but firmly, up the body part as far as you can go. Lightly fan out your hands and draw them back down to the starting point. Repeat several times, re-oiling your hands if necessary, and covering all of the body part you are massaging.*



### PETRISSAGE OR KNEADING

This stroke is normally used in massage to break up particular areas of muscular tension. In energy work petrissage can be useful for dispersing areas of dense congested energy. This is often linked to muscular tension, but not always, so you can knead deeply or gently, as required.

*Face the body part you want to work on, with your hands in the same direction. Pick up the flesh of the body part between fingers and thumb of one hand, squeeze and release it, then repeat with the other hand. Work up and down the body part several times, covering the whole area thoroughly.*



### THUMB GLIDES

These are used normally in massage as alternate thumb strokes, to work deeply into the tissues, always longitudinally along a muscle, and usually on the back. The thumb glide is the main stroke used in energy work for penetrating, connecting up lines of energy (the meridians), and rebalancing.

*Stand by your partner's back, facing his or her head. Use short strokes up the muscle on the near side of the spine with first one thumb then the other. When you have worked up one side of the back, move to the other side of the body and repeat.*