

How to Use this Course

Welcome to this exploration of energy. We have so much to do and experience here together!

Traditional Asian medicine has a history of well over 3000 years. I have been practising in this field for over 35 years and feel I am now only beginning to grasp the depth of knowledge here. One of the things that has kept me engaged for so long is that I am constantly having new experiences and learning from my studies and work with energy. I hope this will be true for you too. So, you don't have to try to 'get it all' right away. **Take it slowly and enjoy the journey of this course.**

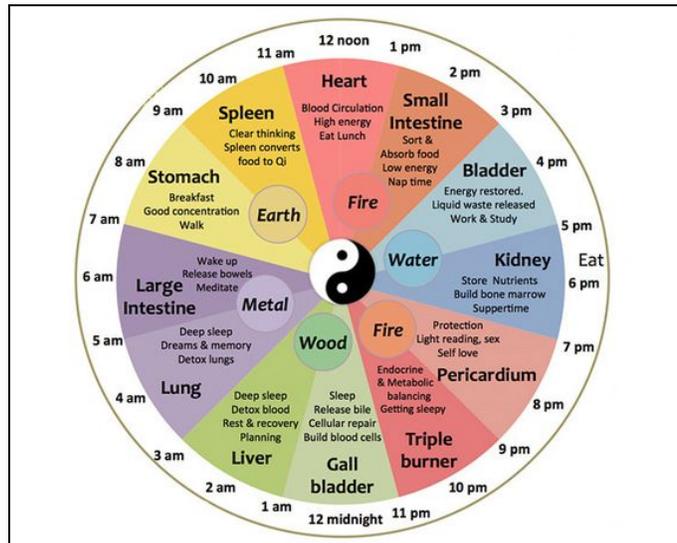
There are many different parts to this course and this is because we learn in different ways. If you are best at learning by reading and logic, then the PDFs will appeal to you. If you are more of a tactile learner, the ki-testing may be your best teacher. If you are more auditory and able to visualize, then the guided visualizations may be very helpful. However you learn, the stretches and ki-breathing will support you. They are at the core of my self-care practice and I hope they become the same for you.

I have designed the course in six modules. I suggest you begin at Module 1, 'Yin / Yang and the Five Elements', which gives a general introduction to *ki* from an Asian perspective, then continue through an exploration of the individual elements in the subsequent modules. You may prefer to begin by reading over the PDFs first, to get an overview of the material before starting with the exercises. On the other hand, if you prefer experiential learning, you may choose to dive into the stretches, breathing, ki-strengthening, and visualizations first and follow up with the intellectual understanding by reading the PDFs. There is no 'right way'.

How you use the course, and the amount of time you devote to it, is entirely up to you.

Try **keeping a journal** of your studies, experiences, questions that arise, and insights both about energy in general and about yourself. In this journal, you can answer questions about yourself that are posed in the PDFs in this course. Also use your journal to keep track of what you have done and what you have learned. You can make goals in your journal and adjust them as necessary.

I do encourage you to **try everything** and to **persevere**. Sometimes it takes time to get used to something before you notice the finer sensations or notice benefits. It is great if you can do the five element stretching and ki-breathing every day. I suggest familiarizing yourself with these activities and then choosing a time and frequency to do them that you think you will be able to maintain. **Make it easy** on yourself. Perhaps you can do five minutes of ki-breathing every day? Or do the stretches daily, with one day off per week? **Make a goal** for yourself and see what happens when you practise regularly, even if it is only once per week. Just don't make it so demanding that it feels like a chore.



Please don't do anything that hurts! If a stretch hurts, or a position hurts, or if pressure on a point really hurts, either don't do it or modify it so that you may do

it safely. **Pain is a message that something is not right. Pay attention to it.** Find ways to do things that 'stretch' you, but in a way that feels good.

Do the guided visualizations when you have time to really relax both before and after doing them. It is also a good idea to have your journal at hand to jot down during the visualization any insights or experiences that you wish to remember.

The ki-strengthening exercises require a partner for the testing. I suggest sharing this with family or a close friend who you can play with regularly. The more ki-testing you do, the more it seems to teach you. It can be fun to teach this to older children, teens especially. It is also great if you do some ki-testing with a variety of people, as you will gain experience of the different ways we behave and the difference in the way energy flows from person to person. What is difficult for one person will be easy for another.

You cannot overdo the ki-testing. The more familiar you become with it, the more you will learn and the more you will be able to relax and let energy flow in difficult situations. In this way, ki-testing is ki-strengthening.

The videos for the five element stretches and for the ki breathing are the same video in each module, but in the introduction to each module, I have added an explanation of how you may focus your attention while doing these activities, in order to gain insight into the element studied in that module.

If you are having difficulty with anything, please **ask for help** in the private Facebook group or send me an email. Your questions are likely questions that others have, and will help to clarify and strengthen this course. In the same way, please share your insights and triumphs on the Facebook page.

I have been teaching this course in person for about twenty years and it is because of the comments and encouragement of my students that I have put it into an online format. I look forward to hearing about your experiences with this online journey I have put together. I hope it is as rich and rewarding as mine has been studying and practising traditional Asian medicine, and I hope it assists you in feeling comfortable with the language of energy.

Here are some comments from some of my students over the years:

- *"I have been learning with my mind for years, now it is time to learn more through my body. What a joy to find this stepping stone on the path to who knows where!"*
- *"I enjoyed the camaraderie, joyousness, body/mind awareness ... it was wonderful, enlightening and revealing and relaxing"*
- *"it opened the door to new ideas"*
- *"It was very valuable, I want to learn more! I found the focusing of Ki energy very powerful. I loved the variety of breath/stretch/ki-testing/massage-- such a nice balance of activities"*
- From a participant who had just graduated from a shiatsu practitioner training programme: *"... this course had the essence of what attracted me to shiatsu in the first place and renewed it in me. The simplicity and joy of discovery helped me learn more/new things on subjects I have previously studied."*