

AXIS/ MIDLINE/ CENTRAL CHANNEL

(Collated by Michelle Wilkinson www.movingnaturally.co.uk)

The primitive streak, a linear band of thickened epiblast cells, appears within the embryo at 2 weeks or 15 days. It establishes the human bilateral symmetry by forming a midline.

The median plane divides the body into left and right halves.

The plane dividing the body into both equal and unequal front (anterior) and back (posterior) parts is known as the coronal or frontal plane.

The coronal or front plane and median plane cross at the imaginary plumb line which is referred to as axis, midline or central channel.

The imaginary plumb line passes through the head centre and the spine which runs deep in the body. The skull bones and spinal vertebrae are home to the brain and spinal cord which form the central nervous system (CNS).

In the traditional Hindu chakra system, there are 7 major chakras known as the root, sacral, solar plexus, heart, throat, third eye and crown chakras. These chakras are depicted as lotus flowers with their stems metaphysically embedded into the spinal cord while their petals grow out at the front.

When witnessing another person's movement, being grounded in the neutral place of the body axis, midline or central channel allows the mover to find themselves.

The axis (midline and central channel) passes through the organs of the brain, sensory organs of nose and mouth, the heart, small intestine, bladder and reproductive organs.

The digestive system starts and finishes on the axis (midline and central channel) with the mouth and the anus. This system is supported by the enteric nervous system (ENS).

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) there are two Extraordinary Vessels, the Conception and Governing Vessels which follow the axis (midline or central channel). They emerge in the embryo at the same time as the primitive streak.

The Conception Vessel (CV) starts at the centre of the perineum between the anus and posterior labial commissure in women and the anus and scrotum in men. It travels up the front of the spine ending at the dentilabial groove below the lower lip.

This vessel is referred to as the 'Sea of Yin' and is concerned with a person's ability to self-nourish and receive, closely relating to the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS). It could be viewed as the sap of a tree.

The CV 4 acupressure point can be found one palm's width below the centre of the navel on the anterior midline. It is called the Gate to Original Ki and therefore benefits the original body ki while regulating the small intestine.

The CV17 acupressure point is located between the nipples on the anterior midline. It is called Central Altar and tonifies the ki of the body while supporting respiration and lactation.

The Governing Vessel (GV) starts midway between the anus and the coccyx, follows the centre of the spine and ends in the labial frenum between the upper lip and upper gum.

This vessel is referred to as the 'Sea of Yang' and is concerned with human activity and protection, closely relating to the sympathetic nervous system (SNS). It could be viewed as the bark of the tree.

The GV4 acupressure point is found between the spinous processes of the 2nd and 3rd lumbar vertebrae. It is called Gate of Vitality and tonifies source ki.

The GV20 acupressure point is at the midpoint of the crown of the head. It is called a Hundred Meetings and tonifies the yang in the body and can be used for resuscitation.