

THE ORGANS

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

The smooth muscle of organ walls with their hollow cavities (viscera) are composed of long spindle-shaped cells with a centrally positioned nucleus. This enables the propulsion of material along the cavity length through slow, sustained and rhythmic contraction like menstrual and stomach cramps. Contractions are a response to hormonal stimulation and nerve innervation.

The heart is formed of cardiac muscle where the cells have crossed striations with a centrally placed nucleus and split fibres (bifurcate). The muscle fibres contract (beat) spontaneously in association with special impulses conducting muscle cells which require no nerves to initiate the contraction.

The organs provide respiration, blood circulation, digestion, purification and elimination. They take from the outer world, internally process them, and then return what is no longer required; there is a continual interchange between internal and external environments.

The organs register bodily sensations such as pain/discomfort, comfort/satisfaction/pleasure, hunger, thirst tiredness and arousal.

The limbs carry out organ desires and feelings via action. For instance, walking away from something unpleasant and moving towards something joyful.

Emotions not released or channelled into outward expression for transformation can pull and torque the organs out of place. This creates chronic holding patterns which underlie postural problems within the muscular-skeletal system.

The organs are under unconscious control, the autonomic nervous system (ANS), except for the respiratory system which allows some conscious control over breathing. A branch of the ANS is the Parasympathetic Nervous System which controls bodily functions such as the stimulation of digestion when the body is calm and restful.

Each organ has its own activity, size, structure, substance and position in the torso. They provide fullness, weight and volume acting as postural support.

Organs relate to each other via the connective tissue.

The respiration of the organ cells allows the organ to expand into its own space.

If an organ is lacking vitality and not filling its space it may create a sense of collapse in the organ, putting strain on the muscular-skeletal system. For example, a collapse within the kidneys may weaken the lower back causing lumbar pain.

Organs can also provide postural support through the compression of their weight into the earth and suspension of their weight out of the earth. For instance, in the yoga cobra position the mid and lower organs are weighted to the earth while the upper organs are suspended. Conversely, in the yoga shoulder stand position the upper organs are weighted to the earth while the mid and lower organs are suspended.

Rolling across the earth allows different surfaces of the organs to experience compression and suspension which results in increased tone and strength.

The organs can support the limbs and their movements. When an energetic connection is made between them there can be a feeling buoyancy.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) each season is assigned with two organs. In late summer it is the hollow yang organ of stomach and the solid yin organ of spleen.