



## Summertime Heart Openers from TCM and Yoga

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By Dr. Melissa Carr, B.Sc., Dr.TCM • July 16th, 2012 • 3470 Views



In yoga, we are often reminded to work toward "opening the heart". Doing so opens up the chest by creating greater space in the ribcage for the lungs and the heart. It also means allowing for the sharing of love and compassion. In the same way, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) relates to both the physical heart as well as the emotional and energetic "Heart". The physical heart pumps blood to the rest of the body. Its powerful muscles are in constant rhythmic motion. We all know that without this pump (or something to pump for it), we cease to live.

The TCM Heart connects to the Small Intestines and one of the functions of both organs is to absorb information from the outside world. The Small Intestines absorb food energy and nutrients. The Heart absorbs information about the emotional energies around us. For these two main functions, the Heart is considered the "king" organ in TCM.

Summertime is when the Heart and Small Intestine energies are at their peak, so summer is a particularly important time to practice opening your heart/Heart. In addition to practicing heart openers, you can try some of the following:

1. Feel joy. When you experience the emotion of joy, you feed the Heart as that is its primary emotion. Seek out people and things that bring you joy.
2. Give. Giving helps us connect with others and bring more joy into our lives. Remember to practice compassion with yourself as well and allow yourself to receive.
3. Eat bitter foods. Bitter is the flavour related to the Heart and many of us do not eat enough bitter foods like bitter melon, olives, dandelion greens, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and bok choy. Even coffee, yerba mate, and dark chocolate are bitter foods that have some health benefits, but it is wise to limit these particular bitter foods.
4. Exercise your heart. Practicing elevating your heart rate with exercise helps to strengthen it. Conversely, remember to practice slowing your heart rate with meditation and/or deep breathing exercises.
5. Get your essential fatty acids from supplements or foods like ...

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Author - Dr. Melissa Carr, B.Sc., Dr.TCM



**Location:** Vancouver, CA


Dr. Melissa Carr, B.Sc., Dr.TCM has the highest standing with the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Association of British Columbia as a registered Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine. She began her career in health with a Bachelors...

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