THE TEN MINUTE ENERGY TUNE UP

A DIY Guide to Boosting Your Energy and Mood Using the Wisdom of Chinese Medicine

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Contents

Introduction ........................................................................................................................................... 3
How to Use This Guide .......................................................................................................................... 4
A Quick Intro to the Five Elements ....................................................................................................... 5
Preparation: Body Scan ......................................................................................................................... 6
The Wood Element: Movement ............................................................................................................ 7
The Fire Element: Joy ............................................................................................................................. 8
The Earth Element: Gratitude ................................................................................................................ 9
The Metal Element: Breath .................................................................................................................. 10
The Water Element: Listening in Stillness ............................................................................................. 12
Closing: Body Scan ................................................................................................................................ 13
Customizing the Ten Minute Energy Tune Up ...................................................................................... 14
About the Author ................................................................................................................................... 16
Quick Guide to the Exercises ................................................................................................................. 17
  Preparation: Body Scan ....................................................................................................................... 17
  The Wood Element: Movement ......................................................................................................... 17
  The Fire Element: Joy ......................................................................................................................... 18
  The Earth Element: Gratitude ........................................................................................................... 18
  The Metal Element: Breath .............................................................................................................. 18
  The Water Element: Listening in Stillness ......................................................................................... 19
  Closing: Body Scan ......................................................................................................................... 19
Introduction

Welcome to the Ten Minute Energy Tune Up, and congratulations for taking action to improve your health and well-being! This guide will lead you through a short series of exercises that you can implement all by yourself to increase your energy level and boost your mood right away.

If the title of this e-book attracted your attention, odds are you’re not feeling your optimum best right this minute. Perhaps you’re feeling stressed by the demands of balancing your work, family, and social life, and perhaps you are bothered by some nagging health issues. You may be experiencing neck, shoulder, or back pain, headaches, fatigue, anxiety, depression, PMS, acid reflux (GERD), irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), high blood pressure, or any other of a long list of health conditions caused or worsened by stress. It’s also possible that you don’t have any major health complaints, but you simply have a sense that you’re a little off balance, not quite yourself, or not experiencing as much joy, energy, and peace you’d like to have in your life. Whatever the case may be, practicing the Ten Minute Energy Tune Up can help you to reduce stress, increase your energy level, elevate your mood, and improve your overall health and well-being.

In this guide I will offer you a wonderful self-care practice based on the principles of Chinese medicine that will activate your body’s self-healing powers right now. These exercises, like all the acupuncture treatments and self-care advice I give, work by stimulating your body’s own amazing power to regulate, repair, and heal itself. While the deepest and most lasting healing is often achieved through acupuncture treatments that are highly individualized to address your unique health issues, these exercises can produce surprisingly powerful results with consistent practice. (For more information about my acupuncture practice or to make an appointment, go to my website: www.NurturingSpiritAcupuncture.com)
How to Use This Guide

The exercises in this guide are designed to deliver a quick tune up to each of your major energy systems. Practicing this short sequence of exercises will help you release stress and feel calmer and more energized right away. This practice is a great way to move from feeling frustrated and frazzled to free-flowing and focused in short order.

**Here are some excellent times to use the Ten Minute Energy Tune Up:**

- first thing in the morning to set a positive tone for the day
- whenever you are feeling stressed
- whenever you want to interrupt negative moods or thoughts
- whenever you experience stress-related symptoms in your body
- during a break at work to keep you focused, positive, and on track
- when you are transitioning from work to home
- at bedtime, to relax and close out the day on a good note

To begin practicing the Ten Minute Energy Tune Up, find a quiet place where you will be undisturbed for the next ten minutes. Ideally, there should be space for you to both stand up and sit or lie down comfortably. Silence the notifications on your phone so that you can be free from distractions. You may find it helpful to use a timer with a gentle chime to remind you when to move from one exercise to the next.
A Quick Intro to the Five Elements

The exercises in the Ten Minute Energy Tune Up are designed to rapidly relieve stress and increase energy by balancing each of your Five Elements. According to the ancient insights of Chinese medicine, there are Five Elements, or five types of energy that make up the entire universe, human beings included. The Five Elements are Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water. Each element is associated with a particular season of the year. Within our bodies, each element governs particular organs, tissues, biological processes, and pathways of energy flow. The Five Elements also relate to our mental and spiritual health, as each element is associated with a particular emotion and set of life themes.

When the Five Elemental energies are in balance within us, we experience great physical, mental, and emotional health. When they are out of balance, we start to have symptoms of illness that can manifest in our bodies, minds, and emotions. By balancing and vitalizing each of your elemental energies, you will be stimulating your body’s incredible self-regulating and self-healing powers.

With these broad concepts in place, let’s get down to the Ten Minute Energy Tune Up. Each of the exercises is specifically designed to tune up one of your Five Elements. For each exercise, I’ll give a brief explanation of the Five Element principles behind it and then describe the exercise itself. At the end, there will be a “quick guide” that includes just the exercises and instructions. That way, once you’re familiar with the Five Element information, you can practice the Ten Minute Energy Tune Up quickly and easily.
Preparation: Body Scan

This part is important and not to be skipped, because it will help you assess the effectiveness of everything else you do in this series of exercises.

(1 minute)

1. Sit comfortably and (once you’ve read the body scan instructions) close your eyes for a moment.
2. Starting at the top of your head and moving toward your feet, check in with what you are feeling in each part of your body.
3. Make a note of any areas of pain, tension, or discomfort as you sweep your attention from the top of your head over your face, neck, shoulders, arms and hands, chest, upper back, upper abdomen, lower abdomen, lower back, hips, legs, and feet.
4. Also take note of your mood and emotions. Are you aware of any sadness, tension, anxiety, or irritability? If so, are there any physical sensations connected to those feelings and where are they manifesting in your body?
The Wood Element: Movement

The Wood Element is associated with the springtime and the dynamism of growth and creativity. Its job is to keep your energy flowing smoothly through your body and to keep you moving smoothly toward your goals in life. When the wood energy gets stagnant, you may experience joint pain, muscle cramps, headaches, jaw tension, writer’s block, PMS, frustration, anger, irritability, or feelings of being stuck and hopeless. One of the best ways to get your Wood energy flowing again and relieve these symptoms is through movement.

(90 seconds)

1. Stand up straight with your head erect and shoulders relaxed. Slightly bend your knees and ankles.
2. Keeping your feet flat on the floor, begin to bounce* by gently bending your knees and ankles a bit more and then returning them to their original slightly bent position.
3. Allow the vibration of the bouncing to move through your whole body. Your shoulders should gently rise and fall and your hands should flop loosely at your sides as you bounce.
4. Keep your body loose and take full, even breaths as you bounce.
5. Continue bouncing for 90 seconds.
6. Come back to stillness and take a moment to notice how your body feels.

*If, for any reason, bouncing does not feel good, you can try walking in place for 90 seconds, focusing on feeling the vibrations travel up through your body each time one of your feet contacts the floor. If you cannot stand up at this moment, place your feet flat on the floor and your hands in your lap. Shrug both shoulders up toward your ears as you inhale and then let them drop as you exhale. Repeat this for 90 seconds.
The Fire Element: Joy

The Fire Element is associated with the summertime and the emotions of joy, love, and compassion. The health of your relationships, your communication with others, and your knowledge of your own true purpose all depend on the health of the Fire Element within you. In the physical realm, it governs your heart, small intestine, pericardium, and blood vessels as well as your metabolism and the ability of your internal organs to communicate with each other and work together. When your Fire Element is out of balance, you may feel sad, lonely, or as if life has lost its spark and passion. You may experience problems with your cardiovascular health or suffer from anxiety, manic episodes, fainting, or panic attacks. Relaxing your chest and cultivating feelings of joy and compassion help to balance your Fire Element.

(90 seconds)

1. Remain standing.
2. Place your hands on your hips and imagine there is a balloon in the center of your chest that is gently floating upwards.
3. Now put a smile on your face, a smile so big and warm that you feel the corners of your eyes crinkle up. (Even if you don’t feel like smiling right now, go ahead and do it anyway. Our physical posture and facial expression strongly affect our mind, our emotions, and even our body chemistry. Putting a smile on your face and opening your chest help to generate feelings of happiness, regardless of what you’re feeling at the moment).
4. Hold this position and keep smiling while taking full, even breaths for 90 seconds.
5. Take a moment to notice how your body feels.
The Earth Element: Gratitude

The Earth Element is associated with the late summer, that time of the super-abundant harvest. The themes of the Earth Element relate to being able to give and receive in a balanced way, savoring the things that nourish you and generously sharing with others from your state of abundance. Your digestion, the process of breaking down your food and then using those essential nutrients to build up your energy and your body, is governed by the Earth Element. When the Earth Element is out of balance, you may have digestive complaints such as stomach aches, reflux, nausea, bloating, or indigestion. You may be overweight, develop diabetes, or simply feel fatigued because you can’t extract the nourishment you need from your food.

On an emotional level, you may be depleting yourself by tending to everyone else without taking time to get your own needs met, or you may feel that no matter how much you take in, you never have enough. Practicing gratitude, taking time to savor and be nourished by the good things in your life, is a powerful way to support your Earth energy.

*(90 seconds)*

1. Have a seat.
2. Think of at least three things that you are grateful for, vividly envisioning and feeling deep appreciation for each thing on your list. Your list may include people you care about, opportunities that have benefitted you, experiences you have enjoyed, or anything else that has made your life better, even in the smallest of ways. The more you practice feeling grateful, the more things you will find to add to your list.
3. Take a moment to notice how your body feels.
The Metal Element: Breath

The Metal Element is associated with the autumn and the emotion of grief. Every autumn we watch the trees go through the gloriously beautiful process of letting go of the leaves they no longer need, paring themselves back to their most essential parts. In the body, the Metal Element governs your lungs and large intestines, organs that are responsible for filtering out the pure oxygen and nutrients that you need to hold onto and releasing what you do not need. Your skin and your immune defenses also belong to the Metal Element.

On a mental and emotional level, the Metal energy allows you to recognize and keep what is valuable in your life and let go of things that no longer serve you. When your Metal element is imbalanced, you may have physical problems such as asthma, frequent colds, chronic sinus infections, skin rashes and sensitivities, constipation, or loose bowel movements. You may also get stuck grieving endlessly for past losses or feel spiritually disconnected.

You may hold onto possessions, relationships, thoughts, or behavior patterns that harm you, or, conversely, you may be unable to see value in or hold onto anything in your life. Full, slow, even breathing is one of the best ways to strengthen and balance your Metal Element.

(90 seconds)

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor, your spine erect, and your shoulders, jaw, and face relaxed. (You may also sit cross-legged on a cushion or lie flat on your back if you prefer).
2. Inhale through your nose (if possible), slowly and evenly for a count of 5.* Feel your belly, lower back, and lower ribs gently and effortlessly expand first, followed by your chest.
3. Exhale through your nose (if possible), slowly and evenly for a count of 5.* Feel your chest, lower ribs, lower back, and belly gently and effortlessly fall.
4. Repeat for 90 seconds, approximately 9 breaths.
5. As you breathe in and out, focus your attention on the sensation of the breath gently moving through your body.

6. Take a moment to notice how your body feels.

*If you cannot breathe through your nose, breathe through your mouth instead. Your breathing should be relaxed and effortless. If you have a hard time breathing in and out for a full count of 5, try decreasing to a count of 4 or even 3, finding a rate that allows you to breathe without straining or tensing at all. Just keep the length of the inhale and exhale even. With practice over time, you will find that it becomes easy and natural to breathe more slowly.
The Water Element: Listening in Stillness

The Water Element is associated with the wintertime, that darkest and quietest season when plants and animals slow their activity and replenish themselves with deep rest. The emotion associated with the Water Element is fear, which enables you to assess risk and urgency. When your relationship with this emotion is healthy, fear serves the important function of letting you know when it would be wise to expend lots of energy and resources to preserve your safety, and when it would be wise to relax and conserve your energy and resources. When your relationship with fear is out of balance, you may find yourself either living with a constant sense of nervousness, anxiety or dread, or living recklessly and failing to conserve your energy, power, and money. The kidneys, bladder, adrenal glands, lower back, and knees all correspond to the Water Element. When your Water Element is out of balance, your physical symptoms may include kidney stones, bladder infections, difficulty urinating, adrenal fatigue, lower back or knee pain. Cultivating the ability to be still and listen deeply helps bring your Water Element back into balance and allows you to access your deep inner wisdom.

(90 seconds)

1. Remain seated or lying down.
2. Allow your body to settle into stillness, quieting all movements except the rise and fall of your breath.
3. Tune in to your sense of hearing, listening to the sounds around you. It’s not necessary to think too much about the sounds, just focus on the experience of listening and hearing.
4. First, listen to the farthest-away sound you can hear, and then gradually shift your focus to the sounds of things closer and closer to you.
5. Now listen for the sounds inside your body – your breath, your heartbeat, anything going on internally.
6. From this place of deep stillness and focus, ask yourself this question: “What is the wisest use of my energy right now?”
7. If an answer comes to you, heed it. If no answer emerges right away, that is fine. Enjoy and cultivate this stillness for a few more moments and know that your answer may emerge later on, or with future practice of this exercise.

8. Take a moment to notice how your body feels.

Closing: Body Scan

(1 minute)

Repeat the body scan process from the beginning. As you sweep your attention over your body, notice any changes from how things felt when you began. Take a few slower, gentle breaths and enjoy whatever positive changes you are noticing. Congratulate yourself for making this investment in your health and well-being.
Customizing the Ten Minute Energy Tune Up

Once you’ve practiced the Ten Minute Energy Tune Up, you may find that you have favorite exercises, or that you are enjoying them so much that you don’t want to stop. That’s great. Any of these exercises can be done by itself as a stand-alone practice for a quick pick-me-up. You can also extend the time you spend on any or all of the exercises for a longer practice. Following your intuition about what feels best and most helpful, you can easily use what you’ve learned here to create a custom-designed practice to suit your own needs.

Take the Next Step to Enjoy Even Greater Benefits...

So, how do you feel now? Was there a particular exercise that had a big impact? If you’re noticing positive changes, it’s a sign that you’ve tuned up your elemental energies and engaged your body’s amazing power to regulate and heal itself.

To address your physical, mental, and emotional health issues in a more personalized and comprehensive way, I recommend coming in for a series of acupuncture treatments. When you come to see me for acupuncture, we’ll have a thorough conversation about your health history and your goals for improving your health. We'll explore the origins of your symptoms and what they are trying to teach you about how to care for yourself. I'll explain to you how Chinese medicine theory understands and addresses your health issues in a way that is practical and relevant to you. I’ll show you how the Five Element principles introduced here apply to your life and give you personalized guidance on how to keep your elemental energies balanced for optimum health. You'll receive an acupuncture treatment and helpful suggestions for self-care that are designed to meet your unique needs.

How can I help you? Every day I help people with a wide range of conditions including digestive disorders, allergies, asthma, chronic sinus infections, stress, anxiety, depression, addictions, fatigue, muscle and joint pain, headaches, and menstrual and menopausal problems. I have advanced training and significant clinical experience...
experience in using acupuncture to support people recovering from trauma and PTSD, women seeking to enhance their fertility and prenatal health, and cancer patients. Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have about your particular condition.

If you’re ready for even deeper and more powerful support for your health, make an appointment now to experience the profound benefits of acupuncture. On my website, you’ll find all the information you need about receiving acupuncture treatment with me.

www.NurturingSpiritAcupuncture.com

Wishing You Vibrant Health,

Kate Quinn Stewart, M.Ac.
Licensed Acupuncturist
About the Author

Kate Quinn Stewart, M.Ac., L.Ac. has been in the healing arts field for over 15 years and has been practicing as a licensed and nationally certified acupuncturist since 2005. She brings to her work a gentle touch, great enthusiasm for the practice of acupuncture, and a commitment to providing thoughtful and caring support to her patients as they heal on all levels – body, mind, and spirit.

To this end, Kate focuses on empowering her patients by teaching them individualized self-care strategies which accelerate their healing and reinforce the effectiveness of their acupuncture treatments.

Perpetually inspired by the healing process and curious to deepen her knowledge of it, she continues her studies through advanced trainings, particularly in her areas of specialty. Kate practices acupuncture in the Washington, DC metro area, with office locations near the Ballston Metro station in Arlington, VA and the Dupont Circle Metro station in downtown DC.
Quick Guide to the Exercises

Preparation: Body Scan

*(1 minute)*

This part is important and not to be skipped, because it will help you assess the effectiveness of everything else you do in this series of exercises.

1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes for a moment.
2. Starting at the top of your head and moving toward your feet, check in with what you are feeling in each part of your body.
3. Make a note of any areas of pain, tension, or discomfort as you sweep your attention from the top of your head over your face, neck, shoulders, arms and hands, chest, upper back, upper abdomen, lower abdomen, lower back, hips, legs, and feet.
4. Also take note of your mood and emotions. Are you aware of any sadness, tension, anxiety, or irritability? If so, are there any physical sensations connected to those feelings and where are they manifesting in your body?

The Wood Element: Movement

*(90 seconds)*

1. Stand up straight with your head erect and shoulders relaxed. Slightly bend your knees and ankles.
2. Keeping your feet flat on the floor, begin to bounce by gently bending your knees and ankles a bit more and then returning them to their original slightly bent position.
3. Allow the vibration of the bouncing to move through your whole body. Your shoulders should gently rise and fall and your hands should flop loosely at your sides as you bounce.
4. Keep your body loose and take full, even breaths as you bounce.
5. Continue bouncing for 90 seconds.
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The Fire Element: Joy
(90 seconds)
1. Remain standing.
2. Place your hands on your hips and imagine there is a balloon in the center of your chest that is gently floating upwards.
3. Now put a smile on your face, a smile so big and warm that you feel the corners of your eyes crinkle up.
4. Hold this posture and keep smiling while taking full, even breaths for 90 seconds.
5. Take a moment to notice how your body feels.

The Earth Element: Gratitude
(90 seconds)
1. Have a seat.
2. Think of at least three things that you are grateful for, vividly envisioning and feeling deep appreciation for each thing on your list.
3. Take a moment to notice how your body feels.

The Metal Element: Breath
(90 seconds)
1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor, your spine erect, and your shoulders, jaw, and face relaxed. (You may also sit cross-legged on a cushion or lie flat on your back if you prefer).
2. Inhale through your nose (if possible), slowly and evenly for a count of 5. Feel your belly, lower back, and lower ribs gently and effortlessly expand first, followed by your chest.
3. Exhale through your nose (if possible), slowly and evenly for a count of 5. Feel your chest, lower ribs, lower back, and belly gently and effortlessly fall.
4. Repeat for 90 seconds, approximately 9 breaths.
5. As you breathe in and out, focus your attention on the sensation of the breath gently moving through your body.
6. Take a moment to notice how your body feels.
The Water Element: Listening in Stillness

*(90 seconds)*

1. Remain seated or lying down.
2. Allow your body to settle into stillness, quieting all movements except the rise and fall of your breath.
3. Tune in to your sense of hearing, listening to the sounds around you. It’s not necessary to think too much about the sounds, just focus on the experience of listening and hearing.
4. First, listen to the farthest-away sound you can hear, and then gradually shift your focus to the sounds of things closer and closer to you.
5. Now listen for the sounds inside your body – your breath, your heartbeat, anything going on internally.
6. From this place of deep stillness and focus, ask yourself this question: “What is the wisest use of my energy right now?”
7. If an answer comes to you, heed it. If no answer emerges right away, that is fine. Enjoy and cultivate this stillness for a few more moments and know that your answer may emerge later on, or with future practice of this exercise.
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**Closing: Body Scan**

*(1 minute)*

Repeat the body scan process from the beginning. As you sweep your attention over your body, notice any changes from how things felt when you began. Take a few slower, gentle breaths and enjoy whatever positive changes you are noticing. Congratulate yourself for making this investment in your health and well-being.