
STAYING WARM...

Moxa in Chinese Medicine

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***A warming roll
of moxa. The
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harmed.***

Human beings have always used warmth to heal, from the warmth of hands to the warmth of the household fire. Since 500 BC, a particular plant called moxa has been used in the Chinese medical tradition for its warming and healing properties. It is still used today.

Moxa warms and activates

Moxa is a dried plant in the chrysanthemum/daisy family (Chinese mugwort/*Artemisia vulgaris latiflora*). Because its nature is yang, moxa warms and activates the energy (or qi) in the body, mind, and spirit. It is used on the surface of the skin before or after an acupuncture point is treated with a needle, and sometimes it is used instead of needles (especially when treating children or those who are afraid of needles).

The moxa plant grows well with little care in a variety of climates; it dries easily and smolders evenly. Thanks to these properties, it has been the warming herb of choice for centuries in Chinese acupuncture practice.

Moxa is good for any cold condition

Moxa is helpful for many conditions, especially when there is cold in some part of the body. Moxa is used most during the winter, and those who feel the cold during that season especially enjoy moxa's nourishing warmth.

Moxa can be applied in several ways

The most common way to apply moxa is to first place a small piece of it on an acupuncture point, and then touch the moxa with a small piece of lit incense. As the moxa smolders, the patient can feel the peaceful, penetrating warmth and tells the practitioner when to remove the moxa. The skin is never hurt.

Another use of moxa is to warm larger areas of the body. For this use, moxa is pressed into rolls about half an inch in diameter and about ten inches long. When lit at one end and moved around about an inch above the surface of

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the skin, the penetrating, dry warmth brings energy to the whole area.

Moxa can also be wrapped on the end of a needle which is placed in an acupuncture point. As the moxa smolders on the needle, the heat goes down into the point and into the acupuncture channel or meridian. This technique is often used for painful, cold or frozen joints and can bring warmth and healing to the body.

Sometimes moxa is never used

If there are already signs of heat, then your practitioner will not use moxa. If you have high blood pressure, for instance, or redness on the skin, or often feel very warm or sweaty, then moxa is not indicated and treatment with needles is sufficient.

Moxa brings healing to body, mind and spirit

Moxa warms and activates; it affects not just the body, but the mind and spirit as well. Sometimes it's not our physical body that is cold: our minds can get cold and bitter, or our spirits can be frozen and inflexible. The movement and warmth of moxa can bring healing to all parts of the body, mind and spirit.



The moxa is smoldering and the practitioner is about to remove it.