

# Rhythm in Life - Chronotherapy: The Most Ancient - and the Most Modern Healing/Stress Reduction Skill

In a 2011 seminar, **How the Brain Forms New Habits: Why Willpower is Not Enough** for the Institute for Brain Potential (IBP), the presenter, Jodie A Trafton, Ph.D. referred to the following supports for moving from unhealthy to healthy habits:

Among the first recommendations for breaking the cycle of unproductive habits are these:

## How can we reduce stress-driven habits?

- Scheduling and pacing
- Work rest cycles
- Avoiding overdoing it and inefficiency

How can we reduce stress-driven habits?

### 1. Improve sleep adequacy and quality

- Addressing insomnia
- Leaving enough time for sleep
- Avoiding caffeine, alcohol, and pharmaceutical sleep aids

### 2. Cultivate a sense of control over stress - Reduce stress by scheduling and pacing, taking care of yourself, and developing a sense of control Learn and give time to pre-plan and practice

- Stressors aren't stressful if you think you can resolve them at will
  - The brain has a system for turning off the response to stress when we think we have control over the stressful situation
- Assess stressors to identify things you can control
- Preplanning
  - Don't put yourself in situations where you cannot ensure that you can meet your needs and stay safe.
  - Have a plan for resolving the stressor already worked out and tools at the ready
- Problem-solving
  - Increase ability and confidence in resolving potentially stressful situations
- Increase your problem-solving skills

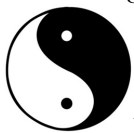
It's fascinating to note that all of the suggestions presented at the 2011 seminar affirm the oldest principles of Chinese medicine, from the Yellow Emperor's Handbook of Internal Medicine (Nei Jing), compiled in 200 BC. One translation:

<http://acucentre.com.au/Classics/SuWen/SuWenLu/Preface.Intro.1to9.pdf>

The Yellow Emperor asked his teacher Chi-Po why people only now live to be 60, instead of the 120 years that was the human life span back in the "golden age":

Chi-Po the physician-sage answered:

*"The ancient people who knew the proper way to live had followed the pattern of Yin and Yang*



*which is the regular pattern of heaven and earth, remained in harmony with numerical symbols which are the great principles of human life, eaten and drunken*

*with moderation, lived their daily lives in a regular pattern with neither excess nor abuse. For this reason, their spirits and bodies had remained in perfect harmony with each other, and consequently, they could live out their natural life span and die at the age of over one hundred and twenty years.*

*On the other hand, people nowadays are quite different, because they intoxicate /stimulate themselves exorbitantly (count caffeine and sugar, also), replace a normal life with a life of abuse, have sexual intercourse while intoxicated, exhaust their pure energy through gratification of their desires, waste their true energy through careless and prolonged consumption, fail to retain their energy in abundance and to guard their spirits constantly, rush to the gratification of their hearts to the contrary of the true happiness of life, **live their daily lives in an irregular pattern. It is for this reason that they can only live half of their life span***

*The teaching of the ancient sage was such that one should avoid the deficiency vicious energies and stealing wind constantly, that one should live a quiet life with few desires so that he could retain his true energy and his internal spirits which are the effective weapons to head off the attack of disease. Consequently, one should be able to maintain easy-going attitude with few desires, to maintain a peaceful mind without fear, to work hard without fatigue, to retain a smooth energy circulation, to satisfy his desires naturally, and to obtain the satisfaction, of every need.*

*Therefore, the people should be content with whatever delicious foods as available to them, with whatever customs in their society, with whatever class they belonged to. This is what we call the truly satisfied people.*

We can see the Confucian emphasis on people “blooming where they were planted” and not rocking the boat of the social order in this quote. However, respect for the underlying biological rhythms of life is what most shines through and offers wisdom for our time - for any time.

The text honors what we now call the science of chronobiology: the scientific study and clinical application of the effect of time on living systems and of biological rhythms.

In pharmacology The formal study of the effects of circadian rhythms on the timing of illness, and therapy Physiology The formal study of circadian rhythms on physiologic and pathologic events. See Biorhythm, [Chronotherapy](#), [Circadian rhythm](#).

## **chronotherapy**

Any therapy based on the timing of physiologic and pathologic event. See [Bright light therapy](#), [Chronobiology](#), [Circadian rhythm](#), Seasonal affective disorder

In oncology: The administration of chemotherapy doses synchronized to the body's circadian rhythm; CT may ↑ allowable doses of chemotherapeutics, ↓ tumor burden, and chemotherapy-related side effects.