

The 12 Meridians and Meridian Clock Reference Chart

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1. The twelve primary meridians in clock order

Peak time	Meridian	Chinese name	Yin / yang	Limb	Paired with	Phase
3 to 5 am	Lung (LU)	Fei	Yin	Arm	Large Intestine	Metal
5 to 7 am	Large Intestine (LI)	Da chang	Yang	Arm	Lung	Metal
7 to 9 am	Stomach (ST)	Wei	Yang	Leg	Spleen	Earth
9 to 11 am	Spleen (SP)	Pi	Yin	Leg	Stomach	Earth
11 am to 1 pm	Heart (HT)	Xin	Yin	Arm	Small Intestine	Fire
1 to 3 pm	Small Intestine (SI)	Xiao chang	Yang	Arm	Heart	Fire
3 to 5 pm	Bladder (BL)	Pang guang	Yang	Leg	Kidney	Water
5 to 7 pm	Kidney (KI)	Shen	Yin	Leg	Bladder	Water
7 to 9 pm	Pericardium (PC)	Xin bao	Yin	Arm	Triple Burner	Fire
9 to 11 pm	Triple Burner (TB)	San jiao	Yang	Arm	Pericardium	Fire
11 pm to 1 am	Gallbladder (GB)	Dan	Yang	Leg	Liver	Wood
1 to 3 am	Liver (LV)	Gan	Yin	Leg	Gallbladder	Wood

Row colors follow the Five Phases. TCM organ names describe functions in the tradition, not anatomical organs. The meridian clock is a traditional teaching, not the scientific circadian rhythm.

2. Five Phases correspondences (classical tables)

Phase	Season	Color	Taste	Emotion in tradition
Wood	Spring	Green	Sour	Anger
Fire	Summer	Red	Bitter	Joy
Earth	Late summer	Yellow	Sweet	Worry
Metal	Autumn	White	Pungent	Grief
Water	Winter	Black / dark blue	Salty	Fear

Generating cycle: wood > fire > earth > metal > water > wood. Controlling cycle: wood > earth > water > fire > metal > wood.

3. Key terms

Qi (also ch'i)	Breath, vapor, vital energy; a core idea in Chinese philosophy and medicine.
Jingluo	The meridian system: jing (main channels) and luo (connecting network).
Yin and yang	Complementary opposites whose balance tradition links with health.
Wu xing	The Five Phases: wood, fire, earth, metal, water. Processes, not substances.
Ren and Du vessels	Two of the eight extraordinary vessels, along the front midline and the spine.
Dantian	A point of attention just below the navel used in qigong and meditation.

What research shows: no anatomical meridians have been confirmed. Acupuncture shows modest benefit for some pain and headache conditions, often close to sham; tai chi may help balance (NCCIH; Cochrane 2016). Never use TCM to replace or delay medical care.