

Cold Cuts

Volume 10 Issue 2

Published by The Raynaud's Association, Inc. © Raynaud's Association 2003

Fall 2003

How Zhan Zhang Benefits Raynaud's Sufferers

By Kathy Laskowski
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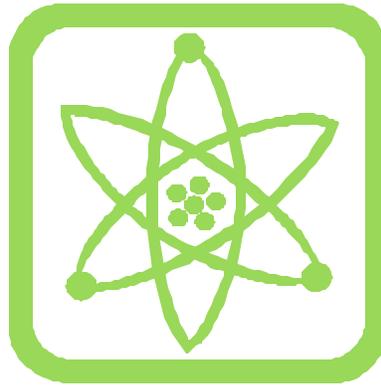
In the course of studying Tai Chi, my instructor had the class standing in one position for a considerable length of time (15 to 30 minutes). This process can seem demanding at first, but over time it becomes comfortable and releases high levels of energy. This energy can translate into increased blood flow, especially to your extremities.

This was my introduction to Zhan Zhang (Standing meditation). I've had success with this technique and wanted to share my personal experience with fellow sufferers.

Zhan Zhang is the art of internal strength. It is practiced through a system of energy exercises. Standing with virtually no movement over a period of time you begin to feel your internal energy (chi) actually generated through stillness. When our bodies are filled with negative energy and tension, we often block this energy flow. Zhan Zhang offers us a way to relax both the nervous and muscular systems, thus clearing the pathways that allow the natural energies in our body to circulate.

Using our natural energy does not mean entering into a mindless trance. It is important to stay very alert and focused. Leaning to relax is only one part of the process, but I believe it is an important first step.

Relaxation sounds simple, but it is actually a skill that with practice can go to levels that initially are incomprehen-



sible. Learning to relax, not collapse and stay alert is essential to the process of understanding Zhan Zhang. Posture is extremely important and only a highly skilled teacher can instruct you appropriately.

“Zhan Zhang offers us a way to relax both the nervous and muscular systems, thus clearing the pathways that allow the natural energies in our body to circulate.”

My classes started like this:

I was instructed to stand in a position where my back was straight and to sit down slightly so I could feel a lengthening of the spine. What amazed me was that when I believed my back was straight it was actually arched. I had to

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Announcing Local Utah Chapter

By Randy Smith
Director, Utah Chapter, Raynaud's Association

During the cold weather of February 2003 in Salt Lake City, Utah I started having some very different and strange symptoms in my feet. They actually burned and hurt when exposed to the cold and upon further inspection; I noticed they would turn white. It was concerning to say the least, but above everything else was the pain which went along with these episodes. For some unknown reason to me, I didn't seek immediate medical attention. I suppose I just decided to wait a while and see if it would go away on its own. It did not go away, and I solved nothing by waiting.

Once diagnosed with Raynaud's Phenomenon, I knew I wanted to learn all I could about the disorder and seek out some form of support group. Fortunately for me there was the national Raynaud's Association and Lynn Wunderman, its founder. However, Lynn informed me that there was no Utah chapter at that point. Under Lynn's guidance, we were able to remedy that situation and would very much like to announce the development of the Utah Chapter of the Raynaud's Association with its first meeting held on October 3rd, 2003.

I had never assisted in the organization of a state chapter of any non-profit support organization before, but then again, I had never been diagnosed with any form of health disorder before either. Was it an easy task...not really. Was it a difficult task... not at all. But if you were to ask me if it has been a rewarding task...I will tell you a definitive YES!

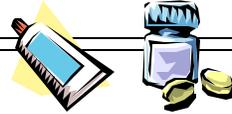
Beginning the Utah chapter took some time but much less energy than I had ever expected because of the single fact

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Member Tips

Members have sent us success stories they'd like us to share with fellow frosties:

- **Ganglion Nerve Blocks** - Laurie has had great results with this treatment for healing digital ulcers. Here's her story: "My ulcer was 8 weeks into development and VERY sore and deep when my Rheumatologist sent me to an Anesthesiologist who gave me a series of ganglion nerve blocks. This eliminated the spasming of the sympathetic nerve and greatly increased the blood flow to the affected finger, and my finger has started healing like gangbusters. Just thought I would share this since it has worked so wonderfully for me...I thought I would lose the finger. I am so enthusiastic, I swear I can watch this wound heal itself before my eyes." Thanks for this great success story!
- **Warm Cream** - Jackie wrote to tell us how much she likes this product bought from the Vermont Country Store Catalog. She also claims that **Aspercreme** helps relieve her nerve pain which may be caused by Raynaud's.
- **Joy of the Sauna** - CJ tells us how much she benefits from aerobics class at the health club after work, followed by a long sauna. Does wonders for her hands and rest of her body, too!
- **Flexible Collodion** - Jane suffers from open cuts on her fingers in cold winter months. They run very deep, are quite painful, and take many weeks to heal. She spoke to her pharmacist who gave her a remedy called "flexible collodion". It works like a liquid bandage, but seems to have more staying power. After several applications daily it builds up a layer of "fake skin" over the wound which stands up well in water. It's inexpensive and doesn't require a prescription.
- **Hawthorne Berry** - Maria has been taking this herbal remedy and says it's improved her condition. It appears to work much like a calcium channel blocker, so please check with your doctor before taking this supplement.

Utah Chapter

that there are so many companies and individuals out there who really want to help. Just about everyone knows someone who has been affected by some form of disorder, disease or tragedy and all of these wonderful people are quietly seeking some way to help. All we need to do is politely ask and one would be amazed at the responses.

My word to anyone who has ever wanted to become involved in a non-profit organization or support group is to simply do it. If you have an organization which you believe in and would like to support, but they do not have a local chapter, then pick up the telephone and call them to let them know you are willing and available. The rewards will prove to be overwhelming!

For more information about Utah Chapter activities, contact:

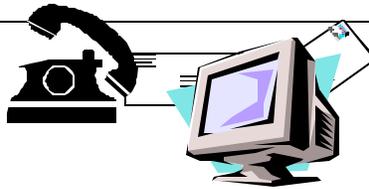
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FAQ'S

We've made a collection of the questions members have asked us most often over the years and posted them on our web site: www.raynauds.org. Answers were largely drawn from the following sources: Fredrick Wigley, M.D., Johns-Hopkins University; Maureen Mayes, M.D. ("The Scleroderma Book," Oxford University Press), National Institutes of Health, Scleroderma Foundation, Lupus Foundation, Arthritis Foundation, and the Raynaud's & Scleroderma Association (Cheshire, England).

We acknowledge and thank these resources for their expertise and contributions to the understanding of Raynaud's.

Member Connections



Members have asked for experiences, interest or contact from other members on the following topics:

- **Men with Raynaud's** - Mike in Pennsylvania would like to talk with other men on the subject. Please e-mail him directly at miarluck@wharton.upenn.edu.
- **Managing in Air Conditioned Buildings** - Sarah in New Mexico would like to talk with others on how they cope, especially inside air-conditioned buildings. She can be reached at Mar1086@aol.com
- **Just to Chat** - Karen in Michigan lives in cold country and would like to correspond with fellow frosties. You can reach her directly at karen@gtlakes.com

Anyone wishing to connect with other Raynaud's members, ask questions or share success stories, send your requests to: Cold Cuts, Raynaud's Association, Inc., 94 Mercer Avenue, Hartsdale, NY 10530, or e-mail lynn@raynauds.org.

Hot Products for Cold Sufferers



We continue to find products that make great companions and problem solvers for fellow frosties.

Grandoe IceBreaker™ Mittens - Suzanne in NY alerted us to these toasty mittens. They are made of Primaloft synthetic down insulation and look like a down quilted mitten. While she says they're the best she's tried. The secret is the extra insulation at the fingertips—where we need it most! The manufacturer's Macro Cap Technology™ is patent pending. Claims superior water repellency, dries faster than down, and better wind resistance. Suzanne got hers at Macy's the end of last season. I found them at Sno-ski.com for \$59.50. Come in black, S,M,L sizes. Or try www.Grandoe.com / 800-GRANDOE.

Gel Animals - For parents of children with Raynaud's, these plush critters make a great idea. They are cloth animals with microwaveable gel packs for warmth, and the soothing smell of sage. Perfect for snuggling on cold nights, nap time or anytime kids need a little extra comfort. Nancy claims this fabulous find and uses "Curtsey Cow" for warm snuggles with her daughter. Go to bluemoonrelaxation.com/catalogue/kids/kids. Available for \$15.95.

Coleman Cart Heater - For those of us who like to hit the links, this

handy tool can help extend the season. It's a heater that fits most golf cart cup holders. Gives off 3,000 BTU's of toasty heat without flames. Available from the Golfsmith Catalog. Item # C5039 for \$79.99. Call 800-396-0099, or go to www.golfsmith.com. Please give them Source Code F1H1072.

Snow-Off™ Windshield Cover - For those of us who have problems cleaning off the windshield on frigid, windy days, this cover solves the problem. It's a protective windshield cover that stays put by being anchored with flaps that fit inside the car doors, plus straps that hook onto the wheel wells (All Around Option). The result: Won't fly off in strong winds, keeping ice, frost, and tough elements off the windshield and windows in the toughest weather! Available from the Directions Catalog: Item # 10738 is the Windshiled Protector for \$9.99. There's also #11114 - All Around Car Protector for \$14.99, and #11115 for Vans at \$16.99. Call 800-525-9291, or go to www.wdrake.com. Give them Source Code 03-VQ-2345-G.

1/2 Finger Driving Glove - Colette says these fingerless gloves were "the best gift ever!" They are driving gloves with the top of the fingers free for full

movement and dexterity. Made of soft perforated leather, elastic wrist and top snap closure. Available on the Wilsons Leather website: www.wilsonleather.com, style # 65000M01 for \$24.99. We also found a fingerless Faux Shearling version, style # 63784L17 for \$9.99. Both come in sizes S-XL.

Cherry Stone Thermal Neck Pillow - This therapeutic pillow contains 1 liter of cherry stones, a natural by product of the jam and kirsch-making industries. Heat in the microwave for toasty warmth and clean in the wash. Order from the Original Casual Wear Catalog, item # 1393-CHNP for \$24.95. Call 888-246-4411, or shop at www.originalscasualwear.com. Please provide Key Code # 3C409A.

Radiant Heaters and Floor Mats - Catherine sent us the link to these foot-warming treats! Choose from heated panels that mount on a wall or desk, foot rests that adjust angles for better comfort, or flat floor mats (2 sizes) - all emitting radiant heat. Heat to 110 to 135 degrees. Available from Cozy Winters at www.cozywinters.com, or call 800-340-1528. The Heating Panel and Foot Rest each sells for \$75.00, Floor Mats are \$55.00 to \$69.95.

Send your hot product alerts to lynn@raynauds.org.



Zhan Zhang

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discover what a straight back felt like. At first these corrections were confusing but as I stuck with it my standing position became more comfortable. I could feel the energy sink into my feet and extremities, especially my finger tips. My fingers would be bright red and I could actually experience the blood flowing into my fingertips after a Raynaud's attack and see the color go from purple to red.

Now I can stop wherever I am and increase the blood flow to my fingertips. This has been a valuable skill, which did not take long to accomplish. Learning to release this internal energy has been both mentally and physically challenging. This form of exercise is not for everyone, but I highly recommend it for anyone interested in building strength from within. It has and continues to be a truly amazing experience.

Finding a knowledgeable teacher is probably the hardest part. The early Chinese culture discovered that it was possible to very precisely analyze the patterns of energy within the human body; I believe an instructor has to be highly skilled and trained by a Chinese master or have some lineage to the Chinese study of eternal energy. Trust your instincts.

Hot Product Introduction

Recently we were asked by a newcomer to test their new product called Warm Me Ups™. The product is a microwaveable mitt that stays nice and toasty for about an hour. Even as it cools off, there's still time to enjoy warm protection.

The patent-pending mitts (not mittens, as there's no separate place for your thumb) have a soft faux-fur cover and a cushy flannel lining. This comfy outer layer holds a gel pack that can be reheated in the microwave many times over. The instructions call for two minutes, but mine required a little over four. Once heated, these mitts mold to your hands inside and feel just heavenly!

While the product has several strong points, keep in mind its application is to some degree limited. First, you need to be near a microwave to heat the mitts. Second, they are somewhat heavy and rather large—it's a big gel pack to hold all that heat. Finally, your dexterity is limited with the product on, as all fingers are gathered together inside for maximum warmth. But once you put your

hands inside, you won't want them to leave!

Warm Me Ups come in a dozen different fabric combinations, including your favorite animal prints (see accompanying photo). To learn more or to order, go to www.warmmeups.com, or phone 888-WARMMEUPS. They sell for \$19.95 a pair.

The product was created for the inven-

tor's wife as a device to help her cope with chronically cold hands. Her discomfort is not associated with Raynaud's, but the owners recognize the importance of such devices for us frosties and have

expressed a sincere interest in our cause, including donating a portion of each sale to our organization.

So if you try them, please give us some feedback, as it's to our mutual benefit to help Warm Me Ups address our needs this winter!



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