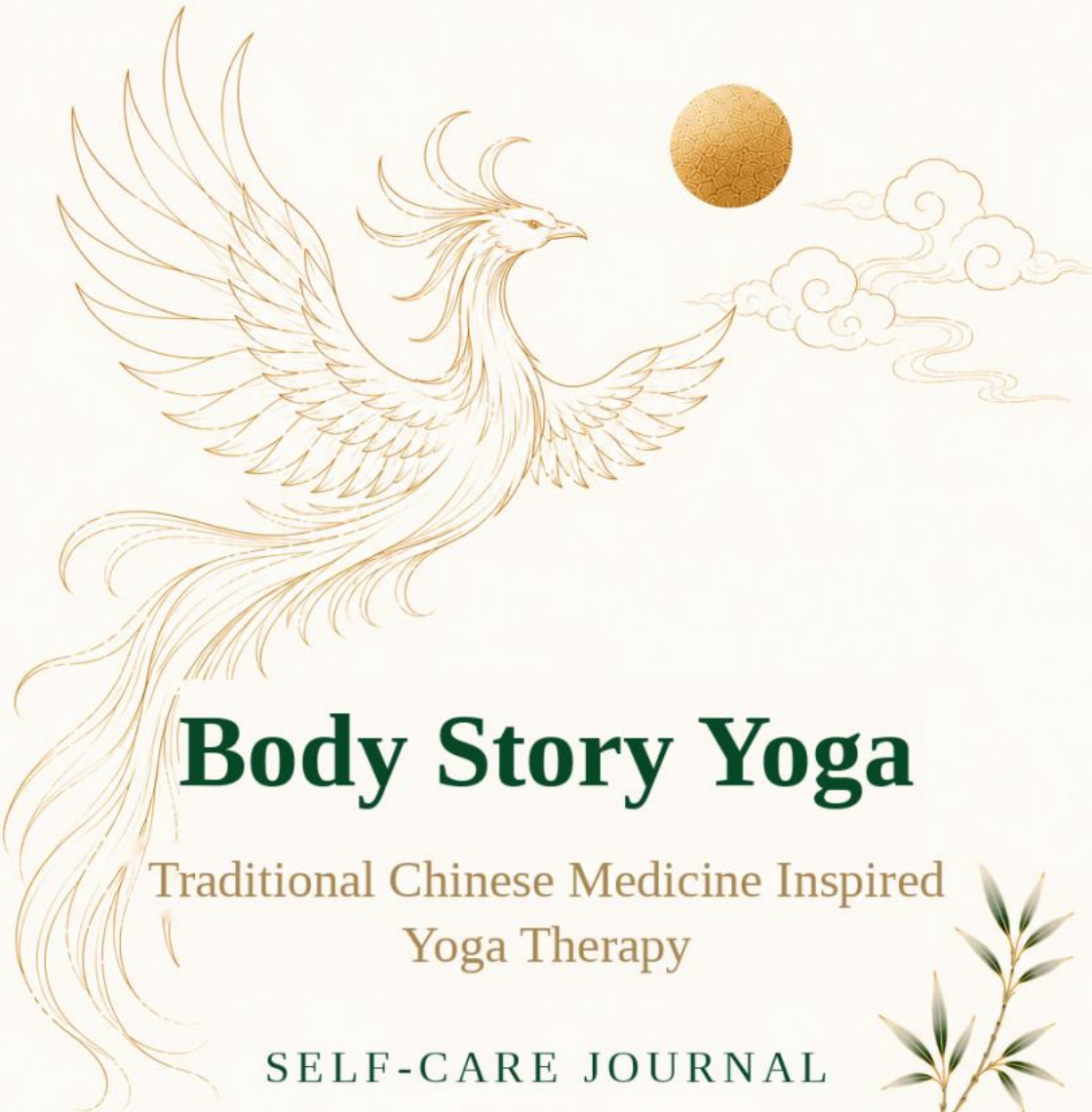
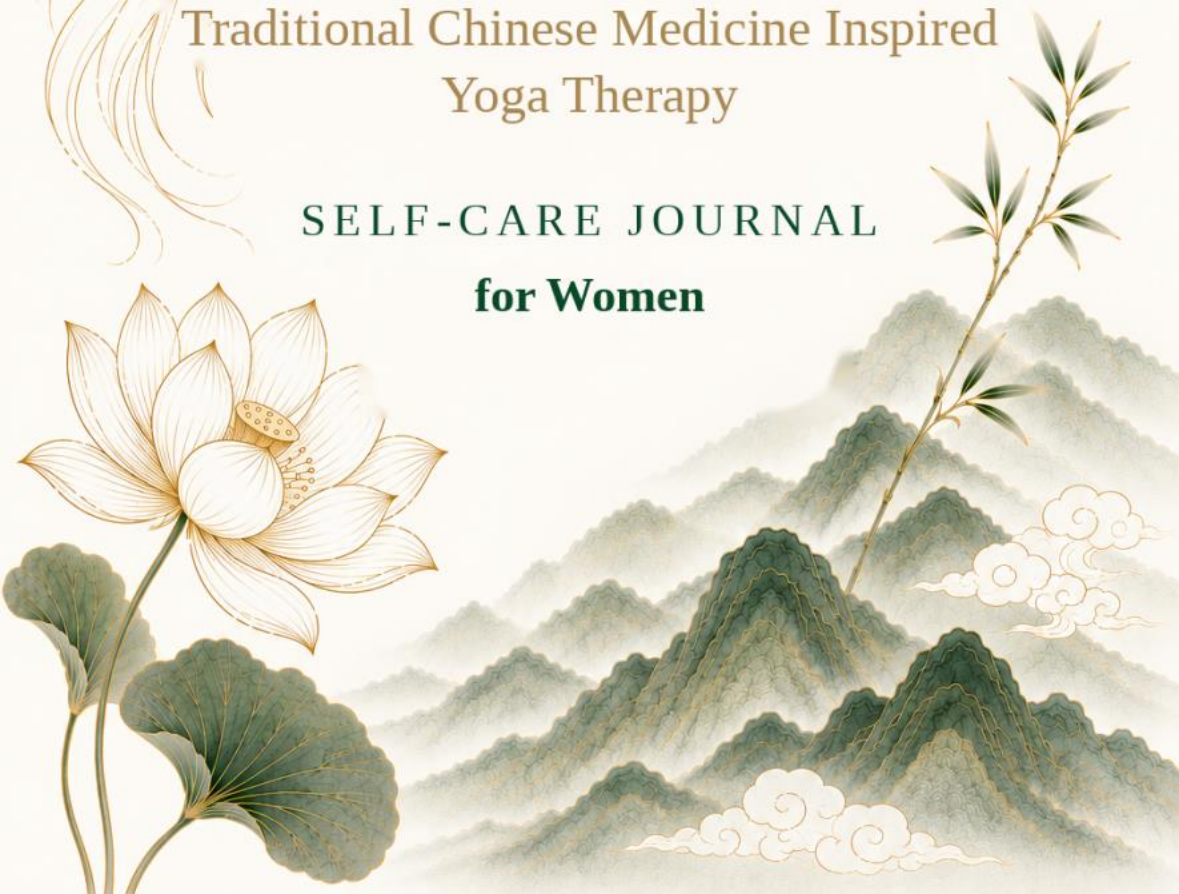




Body Story Yoga

Traditional Chinese Medicine Inspired
Yoga Therapy

SELF-CARE JOURNAL
for Women



BODY STORY YOGA × TCM

The Self-Care Journal

Women's Edition

90 Days of Traditional Chinese Wisdom
& Yoga-Therapy Self-Care for Modern Living

Common Issues with Practical Support

First Edition

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The TCM Body Clock

A 24-hour map of the organ networks

TCM teaches that Qi flows through each organ network at its peak during a two-hour window - a traditional time-based reflection map that sits alongside, but is not the same as, modern circadian science. When something stirs at the same hour each day, this map offers a gentle clue for you to reflect upon.

TIME	ORGAN NETWORK	ASSOCIATED WITH
3-5 AM	Lung	breath · grief · letting go
5-7 AM	Large Intestine	release · elimination
7-9 AM	Stomach	nourishment · breakfast
9-11 AM	Spleen	digestion · focus
11 AM-1 PM	Heart	circulation · joy
1-3 PM	Small Intestine	sorting · absorption
3-5 PM	Bladder	fluids · the afternoon dip
5-7 PM	Kidney	reserves · restoration
7-9 PM	Pericardium	connection · heart's protector
9-11 PM	Triple Burner / San Jiao (三焦)	metabolism · winding down
11 PM-1 AM	Gallbladder	decisions · renewal
1-3 AM	Liver	cleansing · planning

THE BREATH PRACTICES

Eighteen practices run through this journal. Each daily page now names the practice and gives you its dose; this is where each one is described in full, so you only have to learn it once. None of them should ever feel like effort - if a count strains, shorten it, and if you feel dizzy or breathless, return to ordinary breathing and rest.

Soft Belly Breath

Ten rounds

Sit or lie down and rest one hand on your belly. Let the belly soften and swell into your hand as you breathe in, and let it fall gently back toward the spine as you breathe out. Do not push the breath — you are only removing the bracing that stops it. Most of us hold the belly slightly tight all day; this practice is mostly an act of letting go.

The most useful practice in the book, and the one to return to when you cannot remember any of the others.

Physiological Sigh

Five rounds

Inhale through the nose until your lungs feel about 80% full, then sip in a little more air on top of that breath. Let the exhale out slowly and completely through pursed lips, as though cooling soup. The double inhale reinflates collapsed air sacs; the long exhale does the settling. It works faster than almost anything else, which is why it appears so often in these pages.

Also called cyclic sighing. In a randomized trial at Stanford, five minutes a day of this pattern improved mood and lowered anxiety more than an equal dose of mindfulness meditation. See "The Science Alongside the Tradition."

Feeling Scattered

TODAY'S TCM WISDOM

Shen (神) is the TCM word for your conscious presence — the awareness others read in your eyes, the part of you that is here rather than everywhere. Scattered days drain it: notifications, half-conversations, a mind running all over the place. Shen is said to gather in the quiet, which is why five silent minutes with your feet on the floor help re-collect yourself.

BREATH

Heart Coherence Breathing - Five minutes.

BODY STORY PRACTICE

Five minutes of silence, eyes closed, feet flat and toes spread. Feel the floor's temperature and texture, and let it hold you.

NOURISHMENT

A warm, grounding meal with something rooted — squash, sweet potato, carrot.

INTENTION

I gather myself back to center.

REFLECTION

What pulls my attention in too many directions? Can I do one thing at a time today, using a timer?

DAY 8

Date _____

NOTES

Dry Eyes

TODAY'S TCM WISDOM

In TCM the Liver stores Blood (血) and is said to open into the eyes, meaning the eyes draw on a moistening reserve, not tear ducts alone. Screen work asks for hours of fixed focus and little blinking, and tradition expects that reserve to feel thin as grittiness, dryness and a dull ache behind the brow. Distance and warmth are the classic answer — look far, then cup warm palms over closed lids.

BREATH

Long-Exhale Breath - Ten rounds.

BODY STORY PRACTICE

Look into the distance for a minute; palm your eyes with warm hands, and breathe.

NOURISHMENT

Goji and chrysanthemum tea. Skip goji if you take warfarin, and skip chrysanthemum if you react to ragweed or other Asteraceae plants.

INTENTION

I rest the eyes that carry me through the day.

REFLECTION

How long do I stare at screens without a break?

Libido & the Kidneys

TODAY'S TCM WISDOM

In TCM, desire is often associated with the Kidney network—a traditional framework linked with reproduction and deeper vitality. In everyday life, sexual desire can also be affected by stress, fatigue, sleep, mood, relationships, hormones, and health. If you have been running on broken sleep and constant demands, it makes sense to begin with rest and slow, sensory movement. The goal is not to force desire to return, but to create space to notice what your body needs.

BREATH

Still-Point Breath - Ten rounds.

BODY STORY PRACTICE

Make your yoga practice slow and sensual. Put on some music of your choice, maybe close your eyes, and take the time to feel the body through movements.

NOURISHMENT

Kidney-nourishing foods and warmth — walnuts, black beans, black sesame, goji, and a little lamb in cold months.

INTENTION

I honor my energy and desire.

REFLECTION

What did I once enjoy that no longer feels the same? Why?

Anger and the Liver

TODAY'S TCM WISDOM

In TCM's Five Elements, each organ is paired with an emotion. The Liver's is anger. The Liver belongs to Wood, an energy that pushes up and out, like a growing tree. When that energy has somewhere to go, it drives growth. When you hold anger in, your body shows it. Your jaw clenches, your face gets hot, your chest feels tight, and the argument replays in your head at 2 a.m. TCM sees anger as energy that needs an outlet. So move it first. Then ask what it was telling you.

BREATH

Whispered Ha Exhale - Five rounds.

BODY STORY PRACTICE

Move your body — walk, run, or twist — to let the energy flow.

NOURISHMENT

Rose tea to gently move Liver Qi.

INTENTION

I let my feelings move through me.

REFLECTION

What is my anger pointing me toward? What's the underlying emotion of this anger? Which of my needs is not met?

Emotional Digestion

TODAY'S TCM WISDOM

In TCM, the spleen is said to support “transformation and transportation”: breaking things down, taking in what nourishes you, and eliminating the waste. This can be applied not only to food, but also to your experience. An undigested week can feel like a stuffed stomach—the conversation you keep replaying, the news you have not yet had space to process, the feelings still waiting for somewhere to go.

BREATH

Soft Belly Breath - Ten rounds.

BODY STORY PRACTICE

Hold plank for a minute. Leg raises, crunches, or any core-strengthening workout.

NOURISHMENT

A calm, warm meal eaten without distraction.

INTENTION

I give myself time to digest life.

REFLECTION

What experience am I still digesting? What do I choose to nourish me? What do I eliminate?
