



Eight Essential Circulatory Meridians 奇經八脈

Per Taoist inner alchemy and Traditional Chinese Medicine, the Eight Essential meridians circulate within the body and represent a network of channels that carry Jing, Qi, and Shen to regulate the health of the body, mind, and spirit.

MERIDIAN LOCATION	MERIDIAN	TRIGRAM
Anterior midline of the body, from the perineum up the center torso to your lower lip	Rèn Mài 任脈 . Receiving Vessel: Main vertical axis governing flow of Yin. As the “Sea of Yin” (陰之海), the Ren Mai governs all Yin channels of the body. Gives birth, be that to a child or innovative ideas. Governs one’s initiative, and ability to procreate or be proactive. Linked with Earth (坤), it embodies receptivity, grounding, nurturing, and the flow of Yin energy inward and upward along the front of the body. Paired with the Dū Mài 督脈.	☷ 坤 Earth
Posterior midline, from the perineum up the spine over the head, down the face, ending at the upper lip.	Dū Mài 督脈 . Asserting Vessel: Main vertical axis governing flow of Yang. As the “Sea of Yang” (陽之海), the Du Mai regulates all Yang channels. Associated with Heaven (乾), it represents clarity, consciousness, and upward movement of Yang energy along the back. Flow nourishes the brain; governs independence and stability. Paired with the Rèn Mài 任脈.	☰ 乾 Heaven
Up the lower abdomen along the front, branching into the chest and limbs.	Chōng Mài 衝脈 . Called the “Sea of Blood,” the Chong Mai is linked to Water (坎), governing blood, reproduction, and the flow of Yin and Yang energy in the central axis. It balances the nourishing fluids of the body. Vital passage to the heart, chest, and stomach; inherited from ancestral patterns; governs cellular memory. Along with the Dài Mài 帶脈, regulates central energy flow and horizontal containment.	☵ 坎 Water
Horizontally wrapping the waist like a belt, connecting the trunk and stabilizing the vertical meridians.	Dài Mài 帶脈 . Known as the “Girdle Vessel,” it contains and restrains the flow of other meridians. Associated with Fire (離), it balances movement and expansion, especially regulating Liver Qi and preventing excess energy from dispersing. Regulates emotional health. Along with the Chōng Mài 衝脈, regulates central energy flow and horizontal containment.	☲ 離 Fire

MERIDIAN LOCATION	MERIDIAN	TRIGRAM
Inner side of the legs, from ankle to the hip, connecting the Yin channels; emerges at the eyes.	Yīn Qiāo Mài 陰蹻脈 . Governs Yin mobility and walking, as well as sleep and internal balance. Linked to Mountain (艮), symbolizing stability, rootedness, and quiet, meditative energy. Determines sense of self-worth. Both Qiāo meridians govern movement and posture (i.e., stepping and striding), with Yin governing the inner aspects of the body and Yang governing the outer. The Yin Qiao is also a polarity to Yang Wei, drawing up from below, determining inner stillness and night rest, which then determines the strength of Yang Wei, day-action.	  Mountain
Outer side of the legs, from heel up sides of body to the eyes, connecting the Yang channels.	Yáng Qiāo Mài 陽蹻脈 . Governs Yang mobility and postural balance, especially during standing, walking, and external movement. Associated with Thunder (震), representing sudden energy, activation, and movement. Determinative of one's sense of personal power, abilities, and empowerment. Both Qiāo meridians govern movement and posture (i.e., stepping and striding), with Yang governing the outer and Yin governing the inner aspects of the body. The Yang Qiao is also a polarity to Yin Wei, energizing uprightness, which then determines the strength of Yin Wei, the health of the inner organs and the body's deep reserves.	  Thunder
Inner arms and chest, connecting the Yin channels; closely influencing the heart and chest.	Yīn Wéi Mài 陰維脈 . Controls linking and balance of Yin channels across the body. Linked with Wind (巽), symbolizing subtle circulation, adaptability, and the spreading of Yin energy throughout the system. Connected to sense of compassion and relationship with others. Both Wéi meridians govern binding, connecting, and integration; the Yin aspect conserves the body's reserves and resources, regulating harmony. The Yin Wei to Yang Qiao polarity is the Yin horizontal as a cross-pair with the Yang vertical.	  Wind
Outer arms and lateral torso, connecting the Yang channels; closely influencing the head and shoulders.	Yáng Wéi Mài 陽維脈 . Governs linking and balance of Yang channels. Associated with Lake (兌), representing fluidity, joy, expression, and the outward flow of Yang energy across the body. Related to how resilient we are. Both Wéi meridians govern binding, connecting, and integration; the Yang aspect coordinates the body's external defense system and regulates how the body interacts with its environment. The Yang Wei to Yin Qiao polarity is the Yang horizontal as a cross-pair with the Yin vertical.	  Lake