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See Page 77

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See Page 111

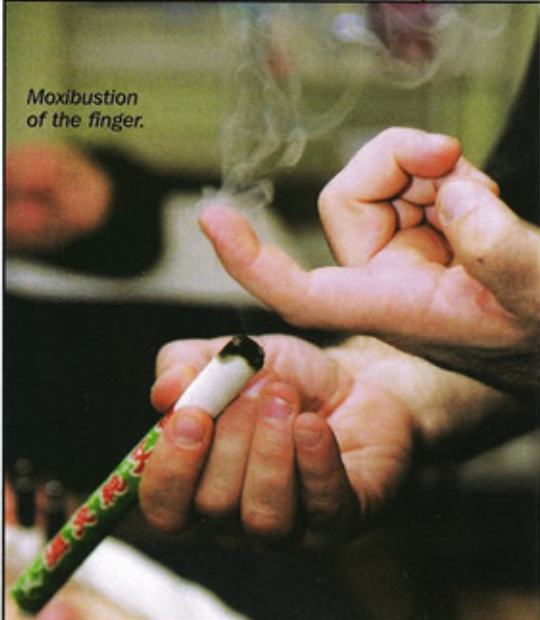
Healing

SECRETS OF THE ANCIENT WARRIORS

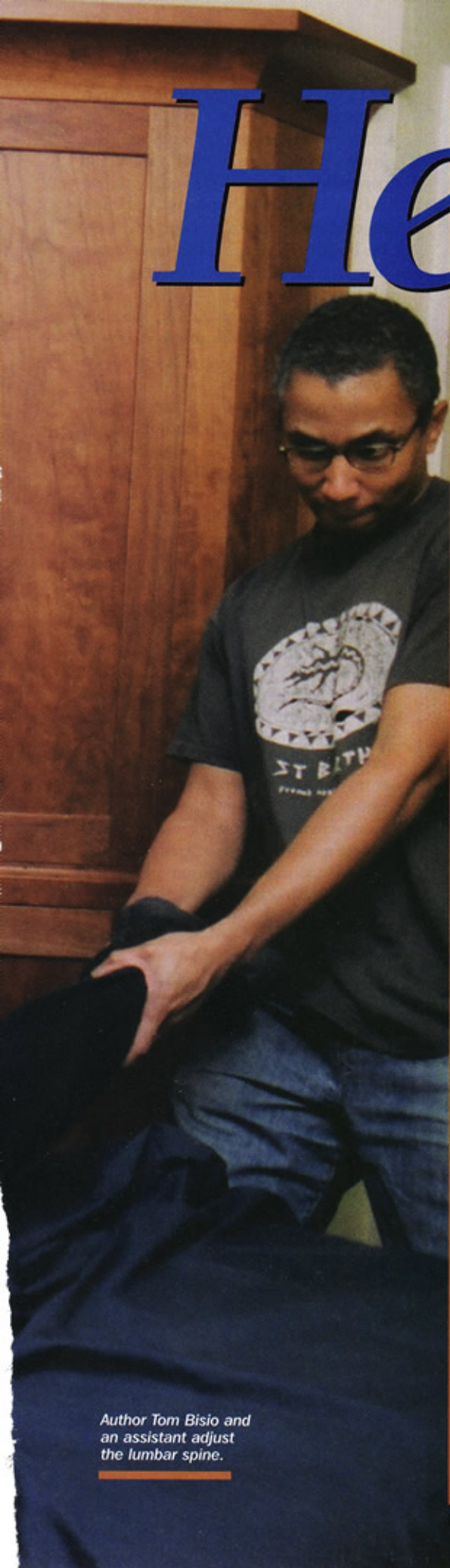
Centuries of warfare and strife in ancient China led to the development of sophisticated methods of treating battlefield injuries. In ancient times, even the martial training of soldiers could be incredibly brutal. Broken bones and dislocations were not infrequent and minor injuries were part of the daily routine. Treatment of these injuries had to be easy to learn and incredibly effective so that injured soldiers could return to battle as quickly as possible.

Martial arts practitioners who realized that they could train harder and more realistically if they had at their disposal an effective medicine that could both speed healing and prevent injury eventually adopted battlefield medicine. This knowledge is as useful for today's martial arts warriors as it was a thousand years ago. The basics of "kung-fu medicine" are not only easy to use, but have wide applicability to many of the injuries that occur in martial arts training and competition.

Although we live in a modern world, martial arts training has not changed that much. Most martial artists have



*Moxibustion
of the finger.*



*Author Tom Bisio and
an assistant adjust
the lumbar spine.*

Ancient Chinese warriors may have had it right. The basics of “kung-fu medicine” will treat just about any common martial arts injury.

BY TOM
BISIO



Pressing
DU 26.



26, the acupuncture point midway between the nose and mouth. Then slap the kidneys. Finish by knocking rhythmically with the back of the hand on the upper back just above the shoulder blades for one or two minutes.

- For spasm of the diaphragm from a blow to the solar plexus, knock rhythmically with the back of the hand on the area just below the diaphragm for one-to-two minutes.

Jammed Fingers & Toes

When a finger or toe is jammed or struck (a common way these joints are



Knocking the
diaphragm.

injured in the Filipino martial arts), the ligaments on the side of the joint are often kinked or slightly torn. Sometimes there is swelling inside the joint capsule itself. Initially it may be useful to reduce the swelling by using a lancet to let blood out of the swollen area and from the Jing-Well acupuncture points on the finger or toe that was injured. The Jing-Well points lie on either side of the finger, just behind the nail. Die Da Jiu (Fall-Hit Wine), a staple remedy of most kung-fu schools, is the first-aid treatment of choice for tendon and joint injuries (see accompanying recipe). Soak a cotton ball or gauze in the Die Da Jiu and tape it over the joint. This allows the liniment to soak into the joint. Die Da Jiu contains herbs, which reduce swelling and pain, move stagnant qi and blood and prevent inflammation. Because finger and toe joints are small and tightly wrapped with tendons and ligaments it is often hard for liniments to penetrate effectively. If after a week there is still pain and stiffness, heat the area with a moxa stick, making sure to fumigate the joint thoroughly with the smoke.

Elbow & Knee Injuries

Meniscus tears and/or tears to the medial collateral ligament of the knee

SAN HUANG SAN – “The Herbal Ice”

EXTERNAL USE ONLY

20 Grams Da Huang
20 Grams Huang Qin
20 Grams Huang Bai
20 Grams Pu Gong Ying
20 Grams Zhi Zi
20 Grams Hong Hua

Rhizoma Rhei (Rhubarb)
Radix Scutellaria Baicalensis (Skullcap Root)
Cortex Phellodendri (Phellodendron Bark)
Herba Taraxaci Mongolici (Dandelion)
Fructus Gardenia Jasmonoidis (Gardenia)
Flos Carthami Tinctorii (Safflower)

Have the herbs ground to a fine powder and mix some of the powder with egg whites until it is the consistency of thick mud. Apply a fairly thick coat over the knee and cover with gauze and an ace bandage. Leave on for 24-to-48 hours.



Usually San Huang San will reduce the swelling and allow you to regain some of the mobility. Follow-up treatments may require intervention from a trained Chinese medical practitioner or M.D., but for minor tears use herbal soaks to soften spasms and heat the area with a moxa stick once the swelling is reduced.

are common injuries in many martial arts. They can be minor injuries with little or no swelling or major ones in which the knee swells like a balloon. Generally these kinds of injuries are iced in Western medicine. Unfortunately, although ice can reduce inflammation, it causes further stagnation of the qi and blood and congeals and hardens fluids trapped in the joint cavity. In Chinese medicine, a poultice of cooling, blood-moving herbs called San Huang San is used instead of ice to reduce inflammation and break up stagnation (see accompanying recipe).

San Huang San can also be applied to muscle pulls and to large muscle areas in which the blood vessels have been ruptured by a kick or hand strike. One of my kajukenbo students received a chop on the biceps, which ruptured the blood vessels in the muscle, causing the arm to swell and turn almost black. San Huang San reduced the swelling and pain overnight.

Impact injuries to the elbow can be treated similarly. Another type of elbow injury common in grappling arts such as judo and jiu-jitsu is the result of repeated jointlocks. The elbow often becomes stiff and painful and will no longer

“Most common martial arts injuries can be resolved fairly quickly if they are treated correctly from the beginning.”



Soaking a foot in liniment.

Continued on page 92

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Healing Secrets

Continued from page 57

straighten. If untreated, these injuries can result in arthritis. This more-chronic injury requires the use of herbal soaks, moxa and the application of 701 Plasters. These adhesive plasters, available at most Chinese pharmacies, have the herbal ingredients impregnated into the adhesive. They warm the area, dispel stagnation, kill pain and break up the calcification that results from repeated injury and can lead to arthritis. They are also useful in treating bone spurs on the heel and Achilles tendon.

Cracked Ribs

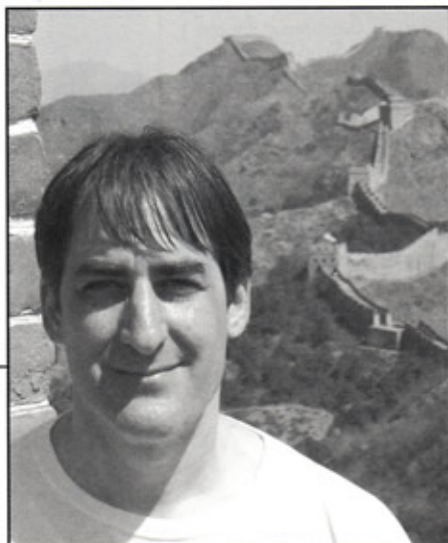
Fractured ribs are a common martial art injury that often goes untreated. As long as the fracture is simple, with no displacement of the bone, internal bleeding or impingement on internal organs, a trauma pill can help to relieve pain and speed the healing process. Sold as Tieh Ta Wan Herbal Supplement, these pills can be purchased at Chinese pharmacies. Take two pills a day for two-to-three days. Pregnant or nursing mothers or people taking herbs that "thin" the blood should not take these pills. 701 Plasters placed over the site of the fracture can also reduce pain and aid the healing process. Tieh Ta Wan pills are also useful in helping to resolve the swelling and pain associated with sprains.

Cuts & Contusions Around The Eyes

Contusions around the eye, or "black eyes" can be gently rubbed out with Die Da Jiu, although care must be taken not to get the liniment in the eye. For cuts around the eye, use Yunnan Paiyao, a famous remedy that stops bleeding and aids the healing of wounds. Yunnan Paiyao is an invaluable addition to the first-aid kit for martial artists who practice with sharp blades. For cuts around the eye, sprinkle some Yunnan Paiyao powder into the wound and then use the membrane on the inside of an eggshell to cover the cut.

As the membrane dries it will draw the edges of the wound together so that it will heal cleanly with minimal scarring. After several days, the membrane can be removed by wetting it so that it will soften and come loose without reopening the wound. Then make a paste with pure pearl powder (available at Chinese pharmacies) and lemon juice and paint it over the wound site. This will reduce scarring. ☺

Tom Bisio's new book, *A Tooth From The Tiger's Mouth, "How to Treat Your Injuries with Powerful Secrets of the Great Chinese Warriors,"* is available nationwide. For more information, visit www.tombisio.com or www.simon.com



Author Tom Bisio at the Great Wall in China.



In my kung-fu teacher's clinic there was always a pot of herbs ready to be heated at a moment's notice. Often, as we treated one patient, another would be sitting with his hand or foot in an herbal soak, waiting to have bones set or ligaments readjusted.

Martial arts practitioners and bonesetters have used herbal soaks for centuries. They are a critical part of the treatment of martial arts injuries. Soaks direct a penetrating heat into the injured tissues. This makes them unsuitable for the acute phase of an injury (generally the first 24-to-36 hours), when there may be severe swelling and inflammation. Yet they are invaluable later, when there is residual restriction, pain, swelling and limited range of motion.

Herbal soaks are most useful in the treatment of injuries to the hand, foot, wrist and ankle, simply because it is easier to immerse these areas in a pot of warm liquid. They can be used on larger areas such as elbows and knees or the back and neck by soaking hot towels in the herbal mixture and applying them to the injured area.

The typical ankle sprain is a good example of the usefulness of herbal soaks. Immediately after the sprain there is swelling, redness, pain and a local sensation of heat. The redness and heat indicate the presence of inflammation. This makes the application of heat (as in herbal soaks) problematic, because heat will aggra-

vate the already-inflamed area, causing more pain, and will draw additional circulation to the local area increasing the swelling and stagnation of blood and fluids in the tissues.

In a minor sprain this acute stage will last one or two days. In a more severe sprain it may take a week for the initial inflammation and swelling to subside. At this point the area is generally still somewhat painful and stiff (with restricted range of motion). There is often residual swelling, indicating stasis of fluids and blood.

Soaks are ideal for helping to resolve this phase of injury. They warm the area and disperse accumulated blood and fluids that are congealed and stuck in the tissues. Soaks also relax tight tissues that are in spasm, allowing the joint to regain its full range of motion.

This makes herbal soaks extremely effective not only for ankle sprains, but also for post-acute meniscus tears or an elbow that has been hyperextended (as in a jiu-jitsu or chin na injury) and will not straighten com-

pletely. Soaks are a key component in the treatment of injuries to the fingers and toes. A jammed finger or toe may seem like a minor injury, but it can plague martial arts practitioners for years and is susceptible to re-injury. I prescribe soaks frequently to practitioners of the Filipino arts because strikes to the joints of the fingers are a common injury. In injuries to the fingers and toes, the ligaments on the side of the joint are often kinked or slightly torn. Often there is swelling inside the joint capsule itself. This swelling can be difficult to disperse because these joints are small and tightly wrapped by surrounding tendons and ligaments.

One of my favorite soaks is the Tendon Relaxing Soak. It is particularly useful for muscle pulls and sprains, although I have prescribed it for boxers with depressed knuckles and as well as patients with bunions that have become calcified and arthritic. This soak relaxes muscles that are in spasm as well as tendons and ligaments that become hard and inelastic after they have been swollen and overstretched.

Herba Speranskia Tuberculata

These herbs can be purchased from a Chinese pharmacy or an online herb supplier. This recipe will make one soak that will last about ten days. Simply put the herbs in a pot

Continued on page 78

Herbal Soaks For Martial Arts Injuries

Tendon Relaxing Soak Recipe (external use only)

15 grams	DANG GUI WEI	Radix Angelicae Sinensis	("Tail" of Tang Kuei)
15 grams	HONG HUA	Flos Carthami Tinctorii	(Safflower)
15 grams	SU MU	Lignum Sappan	(Sappan Wood)
15 grams	BAI ZHI	Radix Angelicae Dahuricae	(Anglica Dahurica)
15 grams	JIANG HUANG	Rhizoma Curcumae Longae	(Turmeric Rhizome)
15 grams	WEI LING XIAN	Radix Clematidis Chinensis	(Chinese Clematis)
15 grams	QIANG HUO	Rhizoma et Radix Notopterygii	
15 grams	WU JIA PI	Cortex Acanthopanax Radicis	
15 grams	HAI TONG PI	Cortex Erythrinae Variegatae	
15 grams	NIU XI	Radix Achyranthis Bidentatae	
15 grams	CHUAN LIAN ZI	Fructus Meliae Toosendan	(Fruit of Sichuan Pagoda Tree)
15 grams	TU FU LING	Rhizoma Smilacis Glabrae	(Glabrous Greenbrier)
6 grams	RU XIANG	Gummi Olibanum	(Frankincense)
9 grams	CHUAN JIAO	Pericarpium Zanthoxyli	(Sichuan Pepper)
30 grams	TOU GU CAO	Herba Speranskia Tuberculata	

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Tiger's Tooth

Continued from page 12

with enough water to cover the injured part. If you are going to soak towels in the mixture, use at least two gallons of water. Bring to a boil, lower the flame and simmer for 30 minutes. Then turn off the flame and add a quart of white vinegar and a quart of rice wine. At this point it will be too hot to put your hand or foot in the pot. While the mixture is cooling you can bathe the injured area in the steam until it cools sufficiently. When you finally immerse the injured area it should be warm and comfortable. If you are soaking a larger area and need to use towels, there is no need to let the mixture cool. Simply soak the towels, wring them out and apply, repeating each time they cool down.

Soak the injured area for ten-to-15 minutes once a day. The herbal mixture is then simply covered and stored. It should be reused every day for ten days. After ten days the herbal mixture can be discarded. There is no need to re-cook the herbs each time you use the soak; just warm the liquid. Afterward, dry the area and keep it warm and away from cold or drafts. Ten days constitutes one round of treatment. In cases of chronic injury or severe stiffness, a second round of treatment may be necessary.

Herbal soaks should not be used for fractures because they have a dispersing, spreading effect as opposed to a consolidating, knitting action. They should also not be used if there are open wounds in the injured area. ☸

Tom Bisio's new book, *A Tooth From The Tiger's Mouth, "How to Treat Your Injuries with Powerful Secrets of the Great Chinese Warriors,"* is available nationwide. For more information, visit www.tombisio.com or www.simonsays.com

My Turn

Continued from page 18

Discover magazine, some researchers believe "there is no upward limit on longevity." Even today, according to the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Germany, centenarians are doubling every decade.

I would recommend that Dr. Overbye review Dr. Alexander Leaf's findings in the January 1973 issue of *National Geographic* titled, "Search for the World's Oldest People." The Harvard University Medical School professor found a resident of Abkhazia, Khfaf Lasuria, to be over 130 years old. He also discovered Miguel Carpio, living in Vilcabamba, Equador, to be 130. Then there was the report of Shirali Mislimov, a 168-year-old living in Azerbaijan. Now, what if Lasuria and Carpio practiced Magnetic Qi Gong? After all, Dr. Overbye's lab tests confirmed cells were revitalized by doing this style of qi gong. And then again, we have the case of Li Ching-Yun.

Was the death of 256-year-old Li Ching-Yun a hoax? A Chinese presidential envoy claimed his death was faked by Li's disciples to protect him from the public. I wouldn't be surprised if Li were simply hidden away from prying eyes on some remote mountaintop, free to continue his qi gong practice.

So you see, Dr. Overbye and I both have sincere hypotheses. I believe he would greatly benefit if he applied the same stringent requirements to his personal philosophy as he does to mine. His hypothesis is based on an ethereal realm without any concrete supporting evidence. Mine is reflected every day in the mirror. Who knows, maybe a new mileage record will be broken. That is, if one has a reverence for life and believes that staying alive has any practical value. Like Dr. Overbye, I've also had a few guesses, but so far I've yet to come up with any viable alternative to keeping my body. So, I'll keep doing my Magnetic Qi Gong and continue to see how young I get! ☸