

# Exercising Your Unique Temperament



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A Science of Medicine  
The Art of Care

Exercise is as essential in preserving one's health, as correct food intake, sleep and healthy lifestyle choices. It stimulates the innate heat, strengthens joints and ligaments and makes the body feel healthier. In Tibb, we believe that exercise further helps the body's natural healing by effectively dispelling any unwanted toxins.

According to Charaka, "From physical exercise one gets lightness, a capacity for work, firmness, tolerance of difficulties, elimination of impurities, and stimulation of digestion." Exercise should give more energy than it takes. It should also not be seen as work itself, rather, it should leave you ready for work.

As with all positive lifestyle choices, exercise should be specific to each individual and especially suited to their physical and physiological make-up. In fact, the incorrect exercise regime may end up being more harmful than beneficial so it is important to know your body type in order to determine which exercise is best for you.

Tibb identifies four Temperaments. Here is a brief outline of common characteristics of the four temperaments to help you determine your type.

TEMPERAMENT	SANGUINOUS	PHLEGMATIC	BILIOUS	MELANCHOLIC
Qualities	Hot & Moist	Cold & Moist	Hot & Dry	Cold & Dry
Frame	Medium to large, more muscle	Medium to large frame, more fatty tissue than muscle	Medium or lean	Thin/ Bony Short/Tall
Gait	Macho stride	Slow pace	Firm stride	Quick / Anxious pace
Complexion / Veins	Reddish or shiny Veins are apparent	Whitish/ pale Veins are not apparent	Prominent veins	Noticeable veins
Climatic Preferences	Prefers cold, dry conditions winter and autumn	Prefers hot, dry conditions summer and spring	Prefers cold, moist conditions, winter and rainy weather	Prefers hot, moist conditions, summer and rainy weather
Food & Drink	Healthy appetite with a moderate to excessive thirst Prefers cold drinks	Slow steady appetite, low thirst, can skip meals Prefers hot drinks	Healthy appetite, excessive thirst, cannot delay meals (becomes irritable) Prefers cold drinks	Irregular & variable appetite and thirst Prefers hot drinks
Health Problems	Hypertension, Diabetes, Acne	Inclined to phlegm related disorders, cold and flu	Inclined to inflammation, stress & anxiety, hayfever	Inclined to indigestion & gas related disorders
Sleep Patterns	Moderate to Deep 6 to 8 hours	Heavy, at least 8 hours tendency to oversleep	Low but sound 5 to 6 hours	Interrupted & irregular tendency towards insomnia
Personality Traits	Carefree, persuasive, sociable, talkative, outgoing optimistic	Introverted, calm, accommodating, patient relaxed, a good listener	Born leaders, resourceful, energetic, outspoken, dominant, may be short-tempered	Introverted, philosophical, logical, analytical, perfectionist organised, creative

Once you have an indication of your temperament, you will be able to ascertain what type of exercise program to follow. Take a simple balanced exercise such as walking:

Melancholics (Cold/Dry) find long walks to be tranquilizing

Bilious (Hot/Dry) individuals like being slowed down from their busy schedules

Phlegmatic (Cold/Moist) individuals like feeling stimulated and lighter. A brisk 30min walk clears any minor congestion and slow digestion.

Sanguinous (Hot/Moist) individuals enjoy any kind of physical activity.

As a general rule for all temperaments, one should remember to exercise to 50% of your maximum capacity. It is better to break out into a light sweat while breathing

through the mouth, than to exercise to a point of heavy sweating and panting for breath. Melancholics in particular, should be careful not to overexert themselves as they

have a lower exercise threshold than the other temperaments. Furthermore, People over the age of 55, regardless of temperament, should practice special care.

As a guideline, we have put together some exercise advice for each of the Temperaments:

### **MELANCHOLICS:**

Aim for: Poise, agility, co-ordination and inner exhilaration

TYPE OF EXERCISE	AMOUNT
Yoga	Light
Walking, short hikes	
Light bicycling	

Melancholics have bursts of energy, tire quickly but excel at balancing and stretching exercises. Due to their personality type, they enjoy the release of light aerobics.

Indoor activity in winter or outdoors on mild summer mornings are best suited to them as cold aggravates their health. Half an hothese individuals. If one feels exhausted, trembling, dizzy or cramping, then it is a sign of a melancholic imbalance.

### **BILIOUS/SANGUINOUS:**

Aim for: Warming up the body, circulation of blood to all parts and increased heart capacity

TYPE OF EXERCISE	AMOUNT
Skiing	Moderate
Brisk walking or jogging	
Hiking and mountain climbing	
Swimming	
Weight Training	

These individuals tend to have more drive than endurance and enjoy a sense of accomplishment. They are good at all exercise in moderation. Walking briskly for half an hour a day will pacify the Bilious humour and is ideal for combatting their competitive nature. Swimming is even better for Bilious individuals to dissolve tension and

stress. Sanguinous types are the most flexible with regards to exercise and generally enjoy rigorous workouts.

**PHLEGMATICS:**

Aim for: Increased strength and stability , weight maintenance

TYPE OF EXERCISE	AMOUNT
Running (long distance)	Moderate to heavy
Aerobics and high impact cardiovascular	
Rowing (long distance)	

Phlegmatics have strong, steady energy but lack agility. They are generally good at all exercises and become better with dedication. Due to their physical strength,

Phlegmatics, excel at endurance sports. They enjoy a good workout which helps clear out phlegmatic congestion.

Indoor activity away from cold/moist environments

are best suited for them. High Intensity classes are also a good alternative for phlegmatics.

**Precautions for all types:**

- Allow 30 minutes before a meal and one to two hours after exercising
- In cold conditions take care to protect the body from damp air and windy conditions as this affects the respiratory tract. Dressing suitably for exercise is vital.
- For all temperaments, but especially the bilious type, it is advisable not to exercise outdoors in intense heat.
- Keep the body adequately hydrated at all times.

Regular exercise is as important for the mind and emotions as it is for the body. Start today and be sure to make it part of your life.