

# SECOND SPRING

== DR. MAO'S ==

HUNDREDS *of* NATURAL SECRETS  
FOR WOMEN TO REVITALIZE AND  
REGENERATE AT ANY AGE

DR. MAOSHING NI

**ATRIA**

*New York London Toronto Sydney New Delhi*

“*Second Spring* tells you exactly what you need to know to keep yourself vibrantly healthy and youthful in the second half of your life.”

—CHRISTIANE NORTHRUP, MD, author of *The Wisdom of Menopause*

“I have tremendous respect for Dr. Mao's knowledgeable work in women's health and longevity. This book offers an all-natural program filled with secrets for women with surprisingly simple remedies, exercises, and healthy habits that are easy to make a part of your daily routine—with long-lasting benefits. Many thanks are due to Dr. Mao for revitalizing the lives of women.”

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—WOODSON MERRELL, MD, author of *The Source: Unleash Your Natural Energy, Power Up Your Health, and Feel 10 Years Younger*

*This book is dedicated above all to my mother, whose blossoming was  
a continuous revelation and inspiration to me.*

*To all women who desire to transform themselves as they bloom into  
their Second Spring and find grace, health, and youthful vitality in  
their lives.*

## NOTE TO READERS

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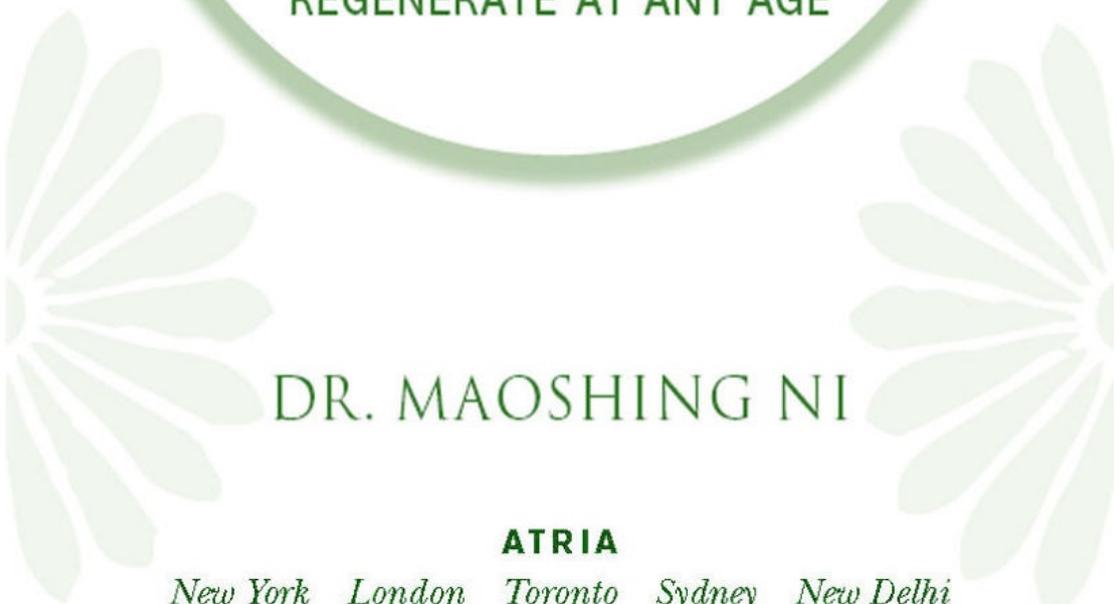
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## Introduction to Your Second Spring

**THIS IS A HEALTH BOOK FOR WOMEN** to use at any age. You may be 35 and experiencing low energy, 50 and going through menopausal brain fog, or 75 and waking up each morning with arthritic pain. The good news is that, whatever your age, I will show you the ways to regenerate and revitalize. Welcome to your Second Spring.

I was inspired to write this book by watching my mother go through her middle years. Other women of her generation retired with their husbands and turned away from the world, but this was not her way. My mother energized and revitalized herself with Chinese medicine and refashioned her purpose in life. With her new freedom and the perspective of long experience, she turned her attention to interests that had developed gradually during her householding years. I looked on in admiration as she became a minister in her religious organization and turned her home into a temple to serve her community. In our family, my father, a doctor, was the public face of Chinese wisdom and tradition, while my mother, with all her character and dignity, was a modest woman who remained within the domestic sphere. Yet her personal transformation taught me more about human potential than I have learned from any other individual. It called into question the very concept of aging.

How do you feel about your age? Do you value yourself as you are? Your health at any point of your life depends on both your physical condition and your emotional attitudes about yourself and your life.

You can look and feel younger than your actual years and move through perimenopause, menopause, and beyond with grace, youthfulness, vitality, and health. Aging does not have to be a downhill slide. This book can help you achieve all this naturally—without drugs, hormone replacement, or invasive surgery. How? Through the wisdom of Chinese medicine, which is sensitive to all aspects of a woman's life cycle and understands that every phase affords opportunities to slow or reverse the aging process. This powerful tradition, integrated with Western medicine, can produce the optimum outcome for each individual.

On the emotional plane, Chinese tradition offers a paradigm completely different from the Western vision of midlife and aging. To the Chinese, this is the time when a woman truly comes into her own, when the distractions of the householding, childbearing, and child-rearing years wind down and her inner beauty emerges. A mature woman is a work of art crafted by her experiences and her own inner resources. She now refines her wisdom and finds traditional or inventive ways to make it useful in the world. Far from ceasing to grow, she embarks on a new path of self-realization.

### Secrets to Our Success

At the Tao of Wellness, my brother Dr. Daoshing Ni and I, along with our team of

associates, have helped thousands of women over the last 25 years. Our success is attributable to three factors. First, women have always been the cornerstone of Chinese society. From its inception thousands of years ago, Chinese medicine has developed a comprehensive specialty in women's health that is unrivaled in the world. Second, we draw on a profound knowledge base in women's health care, passed down through 38 continuous generations of doctors in our family. The third and most important ingredient is our patients' trust in our care and eagerness to do their part. Their willingness to inhabit new ideas and behaviors allows us to coach them through their Second Spring and help each one individually to reclaim her personal and sexual vigor.

### **Women's Cycles and Regeneration at Each Stage**

Biologically, the ultimate purpose of human life, as with all living creatures on our planet, is reproduction, to pass on our genes from one generation to another. So, it is no surprise that, when you reach reproductive maturity, the organism's vitality starts to wane. This biological decline is programmed to begin in women around age 35. Of course, you can still live a long and fulfilling life, free from illness and disability, after that age, but you may benefit from some help with the changes your mind, body, and spirit will go through.

Menopause signifies the end of a woman's menstrual cycle and a major turning point in her life. Every woman's experience with it is unique. Most women stop menstruating between the ages of 48 and 52, but uncomfortable symptoms of perimenopause—the premenopausal period—can begin as early as 35 and last into menopause and beyond. Some women go through perimenopause in two to three years, but for others it lasts as long as 12 or 15 years. It may start with an irregular menstrual cycle along with an increase in premenstrual symptoms or PMS.

As you get closer to menopause and the cessation of your menstruation, new and more extreme effects appear, which can include hot flashes, insomnia, weight gain, and vaginal dryness. For the Chinese, menopause connotes the emptying of the conception channel and the depletion of the fertility essence, but it is also a time for generation of a new vital energy and the ripening of identity. Chinese medicine, attuned to every phase of a woman's reproductive cycle, uses methods tested by time and tradition to reinvigorate the body and mind at each stage.

### **The Second Spring: Rebirth at Midlife**

With its intimate understanding of the female body, Chinese traditional medicine has always addressed the special needs of women throughout their lives, including conception, pregnancy, and childbearing as well as the onset of menopause. In fact, the wisdom about regeneration during menopause is so well recognized that there is a term for it: *Second Spring*. A woman's Second Spring is the renaissance of youthful vitality and sexual vigor she enjoys when she takes advantage of the secrets and natural powers of Chinese medicine. When the body begins to undergo the changes that take her through perimenopause, menopause, and beyond, in the Chinese perspective this is a time for celebration in a woman's life, when she is possessed of wisdom and graceful beauty. This positive outlook on aging stands in stark contrast to the Western stigma against growing old. Second Spring describes an important

opportunity for self-discovery and renewal in women's lives.

As you move toward menopause and beyond, your body produces less of the essential hormones, mainly estrogen and progesterone, that maintain the health of your bones and the elasticity of your blood vessels and skin. Of the many consequences, osteoporosis and heart disease are the two conditions most emphasized by the Western medical community, but quality-of-life issues such as wrinkled skin, lower vitality, and decreased libido can also become disheartening and affect other aspects of health. Emotionally, some Western women dread menopause as a loss of youth and fertility. To add to the physical challenges, in our youth-obsessed society menopause often means the beginning of an unspoken social devaluation for a woman.

But the truth is that no one need be a helpless victim to this phase of life. With the guidance of Chinese medicine, every woman can turn these changes into an empowering experience of rejuvenation.

### **The Western Medical Approach to Women's Health, Menopause, and Beyond**

Women's health needs during and after menopause have been addressed quite differently by the Western medical establishment than by Eastern traditions and integrative medical approaches. In the mid-19th century, a menopausal woman suffering hot flashes, depression, and painful, irregular periods would sometimes undergo a *hysterectomy*—surgical removal of the uterus—on the misconception that this organ was the source of women's physical and mental problems. Although doctors' understanding of these matters changed, the rate of hysterectomies remained high, and a large percentage of the operations were later found to be unnecessary.

In the past 40 years, Western medicine's solution for menopause has been the use of hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Its greatest popularizer was a gynecologist named Robert Wilson, whose outlook revealed more than a little sexism and ageism. He called menopause a "living decay." Supplemental estrogen, he and others insisted, was the ultimate answer.

Belief in the benefits of long-term HRT became entrenched in the medical community and among women of menopausal age. Doctors who delved into the issue more closely, however, were often surprised to learn how thin the evidence really was. Finally, in 2002, after decades of routine hormone replacement therapy, the landmark Women's Health Initiative made front-page headlines all over the country, and the news wasn't good. The study proved conclusively that HRT with a common blend of estrogen and progestin, when used for more than four years, increased women's risk of breast cancer, heart disease, stroke, and blood clots. Further studies confirmed that the risks of long-term HRT outweigh the benefits.

Chinese medicine has long recognized that the body is fully capable of regenerating and that supporting the natural production of all the essential hormones through natural means is safe, effective, and sustainable over a woman's lifetime. In other words, teach your body to rejuvenate itself instead of replacing your body's natural abilities.

### **Start Now to Create Your Personal Second Spring**

It's important to get ready for the changes ahead. By making certain lifestyle, dietary, and mental adaptations now, you can avoid unnecessary suffering now and down the

road. For instance, perimenopause may begin two years earlier in a woman who smokes than in one who doesn't. So don't be a victim of your own inaction—start preparing for your Second Spring right away. The advice in this book takes minimal effort to implement, but your rewards will be substantial.

In this guide, you will learn why Second Spring is a time of rebirth and renewal and how you, too, can experience a smooth transition, empowered by natural, time-honored practices. In the chapters that follow, you will learn many tips relating to diet, herbal therapy, exercises, meditation practices, acupuncture, beauty, and lifestyle that will aid you in your personal Second Spring. You will find your own path to becoming young, sexy, and revitalized, and begin to blossom into a new phase of your life.

Your future is in your hands, and by happy coincidence, so is this book. Let me invite you to make the most of both. May you live long, live strong, and live happy.

## CHAPTER 1

# Ageless Beauty

**I'VE CHOSEN TO BEGIN THIS BOOK** with a chapter on beauty for a simple reason: We tend to notice the face and outward appearance first. What we often forget is that imbalances in a person's life and within her being show up on her face and skin. Your appearance reflects who you are—your physical health, emotions, and spirit. The tips given in this chapter will guide you in beautifying your inner and outer self.

### **Skin Aging and Thinning Hair are Not Inevitable**

Asian women's secrets to baby-soft skin include Chinese botanicals, beauty foods, acupuncture, massage, and natural skin treatments along with meditation, facial exercise, and detoxification techniques. You can use them to obtain a glowing complexion and a smooth, well-toned face.

Your skin is the largest organ of your body. It acts as a protective fortress against the outside, barring bacteria, viruses, and fungi from invading; it keeps heat and moisture inside; and it expresses your emotional and nervous states via its color, texture, and condition. Your skin has three layers: the epidermis, dermis, and subcutaneous, each with specific functions and properties.

**Epidermis—the outermost layer.** This is the protective layer of your skin. When damaged—by sunburn, for example—it sheds and peels off, and new skin cells replace the old ones. Within the epidermis is the basal cell layer, which produces melanin, the substance that gives your skin color and protects against the sun's ultraviolet rays. It is responsible for your nice tan but can also produce undesirable blotches, freckles, and age spots. When the basal cell layer is extremely overstressed it can even become cancerous. This chapter provides natural techniques to help cleanse and renew your epidermis.

**Dermis—the sandwich layer** The middle layer, or dermis, is perhaps the most important one. It contains blood vessels, nerve endings, and the cells that produce elastin and collagen, proteins that lend skin its resiliency. The circulation of blood through this layer brings nutrients to the skin and carries away waste. As a woman ages, collagen production decreases, and by midlife it is down about 20 percent. Declining secretions from the oil glands, along with free radical damage from diet, environment, and stress all act to thin the dermis. When this layer is not functioning optimally, dryness and wrinkles appear. Acupuncture, facial massage, herbs, and supplements can increase collagen and elastin production and tone the skin naturally.

**Subcutaneous—the fatty layer** Just beneath the dermis, this layer serves as padding between the skin and the connective tissue of the muscles. It also insulates to preserve body heat. The subcutaneous contains deeper blood vessels, sensory and motor nerves, and a nutrient reservoir for the skin's upper layers. In women, this fatty tissue gives the softer angles and attractive curves on face and body. Dietary and

nutritional therapies using food items as common as apple cider vinegar and as unusual as jellyfish can prevent thinning of the subcutaneous layer, as we will see later in the chapter.

Underneath the three layers of your skin are the connective tissues—muscles, tendons, and ligaments. No other animal has evolved as complex a set of facial muscles as humans have. The muscles of the face and neck are all joined together in a crisscross, quiltlike fashion. Facial exercises in this chapter will allow you to tone and shape your face as you would your body to attain a healthy, youthful look.

Close to 40 percent of women above 50 experience hair loss, sometimes beginning as early as their mid-30s. This is mainly due to changing hormonal balance, specifically the conversion of estrogen into excess androgen. If you are using estrogen replacement therapy and you notice hair loss, talk to your doctor about getting off the hormone safely. Never simply stop taking a medication without consulting your physician. Sometimes hair loss can result from thyroid dysfunction or overproduction of the hormone DHT. Of course, trauma, stress, poor nutrition, and bad circulation can all contribute to hair loss. Tips in this chapter show how to balance your hormones and regrow your hair.

### **Three Treasures are the Foundation of the Second Spring**

In Taoist philosophy, the three components of a whole person consist of *shen*, *qi*, and *jing*—spirit, energy, and essence, respectively. They are also called the three treasures. When you have an abundance of each treasure and a healthy balance among them, beauty and vitality are the natural results. Restoring and cultivating the three treasures has been the underpinning of anti-aging science in the Taoist tradition for over five millennia.

Any discussion of beauty and health must start with the first of the three treasures—*shen*, or *spirit*. The spirit is the guiding force of our being and our life. It encompasses our conscious and unconscious minds. When the spirit is confused or distressed, it is expressed as distortion and tension in your face and elsewhere in your body. Clarity of spirit reflects externally as a smooth complexion and a contented, relaxed face with minimal lines. Western surgery would have you nip and tuck your way to a younger you, but if you fail to address your spirit and emotional well-being, this is at best temporary and often futile. With meditations and visualizations you can develop and continually refine your spirit.

The second of the three treasures, *qi*, or *energy*, defines the quality of your life experience. Without adequate energy, organ systems cannot operate properly and the cells become sluggish, leading to frequent breakdowns or disease. Likewise, your spiritual state will directly influence your energy. Negativity represses and blocks, while positive spiritual states uplift and fuel you. Energy comes from many sources, chiefly food, air, and sleep. When the sources are impure or contaminated, as with toxins in food or pollution in the environment, the energy derived is unsuitable for revitalizing your body's *qi*. Chinese herbs, acupuncture, and qi gong practices promote optimal organ function and boost energy.

The natural chemicals Western science calls hormones represent aspects of *jing*, or *essence*, the third treasure. These substances are critical in the growth, development, and renewal of the skin. Additionally, *jing* is your genetic potential. Whatever your

genetics, you can take steps to help your body express good genes and inhibit the action of bad genes. For instance, a fair-skinned woman will need extra sun protection compared to someone with dark skin, because, genetically, her skin is more vulnerable to damage. Essence can be nurtured through herbs, nutritional supplements, and nourishing foods.

Ensuring joyful spirit, abundant energy, and enduring essence is the foundation of health and beauty. But you must also eliminate toxins in the body that hamper your efforts to rejuvenate your skin. My integrative detoxification techniques employing nutritional, supplemental, and herbal protocols, coupled with topical cleansing and exfoliation, can usher you toward a fresh, new beginning in beauty and energy.

I invite you to explore the natural remedies, techniques, and practices that follow to help you attain ageless beauty.

## **Your skin reflects your life**

Beauty is more than skin deep, but your skin does reflect your health and your experience. The skin is constantly breathing, changing, and working to renew itself. All three layers of your skin—epidermal, dermal, and subcutaneous—function together to protect you, nourish you, and regulate the temperature of your body. Many factors affect the quality of your skin, ranging from diet and mood to environment and lifestyle. For example, a poor diet lacking nutrients is a recipe for bad, unhealthy skin. Alternatively, studies show that a nutritious diet—particularly of leafy greens and dried plums—can have a protective effect against wrinkling. Depression, anxiety, and stress create tension in your skin, particularly on the face and causes uneven blotches and lines. Sun damage and dry, cold, or windy weather rob the skin of vital moisture and circulation, leading to prematurely older-looking skin. Finally, smoking, excessive alcohol use, and lack of sleep all show up on your skin, reflecting your excesses like signed confessions.

## Antiwrinkle Acupuncture

One of the secrets of Chinese women's youthful looks is the acupuncture face-lift. For centuries, the empresses and concubines of China's imperial palace used specialized techniques to erase fine lines and prevent wrinkles. Facial acupuncture is not a surgical procedure, but steadily improves muscle and skin tone in the face and slows the effects of gravity. Studies show that acupuncture increases blood flow in the tiny capillaries of the skin and muscles and stimulates collagen production in the dermis layer, increasing skin elasticity. The course is typically 10 to 12 treatments over two or three months, combined with nutritional and herbal supplements, which you will find in the next section. Be sure to work with practitioners who are specially trained in acupuncture for the face. Typical points include GB-14 to relax the forehead, Yintang to ease furrowing between the brows, Taiyang to get rid of crow's-feet around the corner of the eyes, and LI-20 and ST-3 for diminishing smile lines. You can also do acupressure on yourself, as shown in the next tip.



## **Do-it-yourself “face-lift”**

Some wrinkles can be distressing signs of aging. You see them on the surface, but to address them, you need to look deeper. The middle layer of the skin, or dermis, supports the epidermal outer layer with nutrients from the blood and produces two crucial elements, collagen and elastin—proteins that support the connective tissue and give resilience to the skin. Like acupuncture, acupressure, the art of acupuncture without needles, can give you a nonsurgical face-lift, by toning facial muscles and stimulating natural production and deposit of collagen in the skin. You can learn to do acupressure on yourself. Simply press firmly with your fingers, working your way methodically along the wrinkle line, and your body will respond with increased circulation and nutrient delivery. Do this in the morning and at night for beautiful skin tone well into your late years. For specific points, please refer to previous tip.

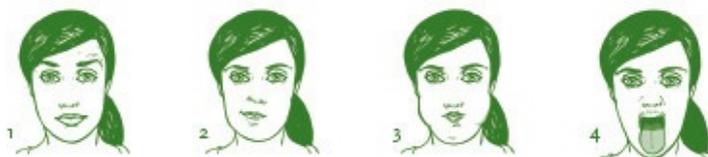


## Gymnastics for your face

To tone up your facial muscles, give them a workout! Do these exercises twice a day, five repetitions apiece:

- 1) Raise your eyebrows as high as you can—strain for it—and then relax them.
- 2) Try to move your nose from side to side.
- 3) Inflate your cheeks as though you're blowing up a balloon, then relax.
- 4) Open your mouth as wide as it can go, then stick out your tongue as far as you can. Hold for five seconds.

After all that hard work, your face deserves a massage. Stroke the whole face with a circular motion to warm it up. Then with the thumb and first finger of both of your hands pinch five times along your eyebrow line, from inside to outside. Press along both sides of the nose, where it meets the cheeks, from top to bottom, five times. Press the area around the outside of the mouth five times. Gently pat your cheeks with your fingers to stimulate the side of your face. Press the forehead lines between your eyebrows five times along each line. Now press the edges of the eye orbit, pushing gently above the eye and under its lower rim. Finish the massage with another round of circular strokes all over the face.



## **Skin secrets of Chinese courtesans**

The outermost layer of the skin regularly renews itself by shedding old cells and replacing them with new ones. By hastening the shedding process, you can immediately diminish the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. Costly medical procedures such as dermabrasion, chemical peel, and various laser therapies also do this, but they can produce redness and irritation lasting for days afterwards. There are gentler ways to renew your skin with products from nature. For centuries, Chinese imperial courtesans used seaweed, kelp, pearl powder, dried plum, winter melon seed, persimmon leaf, and cane sugar—natural exfoliation and polishing agents that loosen and strip dead skin cells off evenly. Most of these ingredients are available in health food stores and Chinese groceries. Make a mask with these natural ingredients listed above, in any combination. Simply moisten with water and place in a blender with aloe vera gel or egg white to make a paste. Scrub gently with a wet loofah sponge, using small circular motions, until face and neck are thoroughly exfoliated. Leave the mask on for 10 minutes, then wash off. Avoid getting in your eyes.

## **Rich is poor...nutrition**

In Chinese medicine, rich foods like dairy, meat, fats, sweets, and alcohol are said to cause phlegm and dampness in the body. I have observed this phenomenon consistently in my patients: When they consume excessive amounts of these things, they develop a variety of symptoms such as sinus and chest congestion, postnasal drip, a sensation of heaviness, joint pain and stiffness, abdominal bloating, gas, loose bowel movements, high cholesterol, brain fog, fatigue, depression, and, of course, obesity. Most people don't have to completely eliminate the phlegm-and dampness-inducing foods; if you simply cut down on the quantity and frequency of consumption, you will improve how you feel overall. And you'll also lighten both your weight and your mood.