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**The detox issue**

**Cheer pressure**

**A bummed-out film prof goes from SAD to glad with the help of needles and kneading.**

By Ruth Welte

Photograph by Simone Bonde

### Seasonal-Affective Disorder

**The stress case** Most of the time, Dan Rybicky, 41, is a dynamic guy. But the voluble Columbia film prof's characteristic verve drains out of him each winter. "When it gets dark out and colder, I lose energy," he says. "In the winter, all I want to do is sleep. I've noticed it especially in the last three to four years."

**The holistic treatment** Dr. Leon Chen recommended a combination of acupuncture and *tui na*. Tui na is a traditional Chinese manipulation treatment that combines massage and acupressure, but unlike massage, which works only muscle, tui na also works soft tissue (such as tendons and ligaments), with a focus on points on the body that affect the flow of qi (pronounced "chee"), or vital energy. A main goal of tui na, according to Chen, is to balance the body's energy and improve blood circulation. The combined treatment can help SAD by counteracting the lethargy that winter brings.

Chen's office at [Wellness Associates of Chicago](#) is comfortingly unfussy: "There's no spa feeling; it definitely felt like a meat-and-potatoes, old-school office," Rybicky notes. After discussing details of Rybicky's SAD, Chen had him lie, fully clothed, on a treatment table. "[Dr. Chen] said, 'You need to breathe deeper; that's what we're going to try to do, unblock the lungs so you breathe deeper,'" Rybicky recounts. Chen put needles in Rybicky's forehead, arms and ankles. Then he left the room for about 30 minutes and let the needles do their work. "I really went out," Rybicky says. "I had one of those 'I'm in the middle of a waking dream' kind of feelings. Thirty minutes could've been four hours. When he came back in the room, I felt like my body had definitely gone through something." Chen returned and performed the tui na part of the treatment, which involved pressing and rubbing Rybicky's fingers, arms and the back of his head and neck.



**The result** Rybicky was not immediately converted by the tui na but was impressed by the acupuncture. He expresses faith in Chen's abilities and plans to continue treatment. "When I walked out of there, I did feel better; I definitely felt like I was breathing deeper." After a second treatment a week later, he was even more convinced: "I don't feel as bleak and bleary. A week like this could normally put me right under the covers."

4250 N Marine Dr, suite 200, 773-935-6377. \$70 for 60 minute