

Twenty-Eight Pulses

Major Group Pinyin	English	Sub Group Pinyin	English	Description	Significance	Notes
Fu	Superficial	Fu	Superficial / floating	Pulse is strongest at highest levels. Can be felt with slight touch, grows faint with pressure	External pathogen or deficiency	e.g. common cold, Xu = special case = false shen
		Hong	Surging / overflowing	Broad, large, forceful rise, but gentle decline, like an ocean wave	Excess Heat	Yang ming = 4 greats
		Ru	Soft / soggy	Superficial / thready = thin / weak - without strength / grows faint with pressure	Deficiency / Dampness / Wind?	e.g. SP Qi Xu <b>compare to Ruo</b>
		San	Scattered	Scattered / collapsed / without root / hardly perceptible / irregular	Depletion of Yuan Qi	<b><u>Crisis pulse</u></b>
		Kou	Hollow	Large / empty inside, like soft hollow (scallion) stalk	Loss of blood / Yin Xu	<b>compare to Ge</b>
		Ge	Leather	Wiry / fast / empty inside, hard like drum	Essence or Xue Xu / Cold	Essence Xu = BAD <b>compare to Kou</b>
Chen	Deep	Chen	Deep	Pulse is strongest at lowest level. Can only be felt with deep pressure	Internal Syndrome	
		Fu	Hidden	Can only be felt by pressing hard to the bone, deeper than Chen	Closing syndrome, Syncope, extreme pain	everything clenched, like seizure
		Lao	Firm	Full = strong / large / wiry / long / not gentle	Cold / Internal excess / shan disorder / mass	shan disorder = hernia, mass = e.g. cancer
		Ruo	Weak	Deep / thready = thin / weak - without strength / soft	Qi or Xue Xu	Usually indicate SP Qi Xu <b>compare to Ru</b>

Major Group Pinyin	English	Sub Group Pinyin	English	Description	Significance	Notes
Chi	Slow (normal depth)	Chi	Slow	< 60 beats per minute (4 beats per breath)	Cold	Xu (Yang Qi Xu esp; slow and weak) or Excess (begins as external pathogen but can go internal; slow and strong). Can also be a very fit person at rest.
		Huan	Slowed down	60 b/m sluggish, normal depth, width, strength	Dampness	often indicate Sp Qi Xu. Softness due to the weakness of qi and obstructing effect of damp. Like walking in water
		Se	Choppy / uneven	Uneven and rough. Like knife scraping across bamboo	Blood Xu / xue stagnation / food stagnation / phlegm	Does NOT indicate cold. Severity of blood disorder is greater. Blood stasis, often assoc w. surgery
		Jie	Knotted / irregular	Irregularly irregular, slow, misses a beat without pattern	Yin excess / cold / phlegm / xue stasis / qi yu	often associated with coronary heart disease
Shou	Rapid (normal depth)	Shuo	Rapid / Fast	> 90 b/m (5 beats/breath)	Heat	can be due to fever, or physical activity
		Cu	Abrupt / hasty/ irregular	Hurried / rapid/ irregular missed beat	Excess Yang heat / qi & xue yu / phlegm or food retention	Excess heat creates strong and rapid pulse, stagnation creates irregularity. <b>Compare to Xi</b> Empty heat (Yin Xu) = weak and rapid
		Ji	Swift	> 120 b/m (7 beats/breath)	Crisis pulse. Depletion of Yuan Qi	<b><u>Crisis pulse</u> compare to San</b>
		Dong	Moving	Short / slippery / fast / forceful / felt in only one position "incomplete"	Pain or Fright	

English	Sub Group Pinyin	English	Description	Significance	Notes
Deficient	Xu	Empty / Deficient	Feeble / void / forceless at all levels and in all finger positions	Xu	Blood Xu is more severe than previous, but not as severe as a wei pulse. compare to weak = Ruo, fine = Xi, and faint = Wei
	Wei	Minute / Feeble	Extremely thin and soft / thready / barely perceptible	Yin / Yang / Qi / Xue deficiency	extreme exhaustion of body essences, v bad prognosis. <b>Crisis pulse</b>
	Xi	Thready / Thin	Fine thread, very distinct and clear at all levels	Deficiency due to stress and strain / Xue or Qi Xu / dampness / Yin Xu	Essence Xu as a result of chronic illness can lead to a Xi pulse. Yin Xu = Empty heat. <b>Compare to Cu &amp; Ruo</b>
	Dai	Intermittent / irregular	Slow / pauses at regular intervals = regular irregular	Exhaustion of organs or trauma	Normaly patient has been hospitalized or in advanced stage of disease
	Duan	Short	Not felt in all three finger positions	Qi Xu or stagnation	Deteriorates from central to outer positions
Excess	Shi	Full / Excess	v. strong at all three levels and all pressures	Excess Heat	
	Hua	Slippery	regular, orderly, smooth, like pearls rolling on a dish	Dampness, Phlegm, Food stagnation, Excess heat, Pregnancy or menses	Never indicates Xu. Can be seen in pregnancy and menses. Good confirmation of phelgm-damp retention
	Jin	Tight	Tight, taut, thicker, like a stretched rope, inflexible	Cold, Pain, Food retention	Even tighter than Xuan
	Chang	Long	Long pulse with prolonged stroke, straight, in all 3 positions, beyond any single position	Excess yang qi / heat	can be normal for young people. Can represent acute or strong confrontation between wei qi and pathogen
	Xuan	Wiry / Taut	Taut, straight, long, like a violin string, hits finger hard, middle level pulse	LV / GB / pain / phlegm / malaria	Wiry pulse confirms LV &/or GB as focus of disharmony. <b>Compare to superficial level Ge pulse</b>