

2.

Sunken/submerged pulse

Description: can only be felt upon deep pressure

Indicates:

- interior condition,
- dz in/of the viscera,
- endogenous dz
(normal during winter)

1.

Floating pulse

Description: feels strong with light pressure but weakens or disappears when pressure is applied

Indicates:

- exterior condition,
- dz at surface,
- exogenous invasion

4.

Fast/Rapid pulse

Description: count six beats per respiration

Indicates:

- the presence of heat

3.

Slow pulse

Description: count three beats per respiration

Indicates:

- the presence of cold

6.

Choppy/rough pulse

Description: feels rough and uneven irregular pace, but does not skip also thin, weak and short

Indicates:

- depletion of yin (blood or fluids)
(usu significant loss of fluids due to; sweating, vomiting, diarrhea, or hemorrhage)
- blood stasis

5.

Slippery/rolling pulse

Description: feels extra smooth & slides/rolls by feels round & continuous vs. undulating

Indicates:

- accumulation of dampness or phlegm
- food retention
- pregnancy

8.

Full pulse

Description: feels strong and forceful can be felt from superficial to deep

Indicates:

- a shi condition
(repletion, accumulation, hyperfunction)

7.

Empty pulse

Description: feels weak & forceless can be big and superficial

Indicates:

- a xu condition
(depletion, insufficiency, hypofunction)

10.

Short pulse

Description: does not fill all three positions can be confined to guan position

Indicates:

- qi xu (esp. Lu, ST, Kd)
leading to qi & blood stasis

9.

Long pulse

Description: extends beyond the three positions

Indicates:

- good health, strong constitution
- excess heat (esp. Yangming, or heat in blood)
- wind & phlegm (epilepsy)

12.

Minute (hairlike) pulse

Description: feels very thin and soft, vague & indistinct, it is almost imperceptible, upon pressure it breaks apart

Indicates:

- yang xu,
- collapse of yang
- severe def. of both qi & blood

14.

Leisurely/relaxed/moderate pulse
Sluggish/slowed down pulse

Description: four beats per respiration

Indicates:

- healthy (good aerobic fitness)
- + floating = wind damage
- + deep = damp disorder
- + large = Lr wind stirring
- + weak = Ht qi xu

16.

Wiry/bowstring pulse

Description: it is taut and forceful, like a guitar string it does not seem to undulate, but also does not vibrate

Indicates:

- pain
- Lr/GB pathology (normal during springtime)

18.

Bound pulse

Description: very deep, almost hidden but once found is strong & impatient

Indicates:

- extreme excess
- internal accumulation of cold
- Lr qi stagnation (can be normal during winter)

20.

Frail/feeble pulse

Description: deep, but also very thin & soft

Indicates:

- yang qi is weak (unable to raise the pulse) (insufficiency of yin leads to collapse of yang)

11.

Flooding/surging pulse

Description: feels big, it rises strongly, but then fades out

Indicates:

- a shi condition, usu. excess heat/fire (normal during summer)

13.

Tight (ropey) pulse

Description: rises & falls with strength but vibrates to & fro feels like a rope both taut & twisting

Indicates:

- usu. shi condition
- presence of cold
- pain

15.

Hollow/scallion stalk pulse

Description: at the surface it is big & soft substantial at the edge, it is empty in the center

Indicates:

- blood xu, d/t significant blood loss (result of heat induced bleeding)

17.

Leather/drum pulse

Description: at the surface it is tight & firm in the center it feels empty

Indicates:

- severe deficiency
- follows significant loss of blood or jing
- assoc. with cold & xu conditions

19.

Soggy/soft pulse

Description: superficial, thin, weak, & soft

Indicates:

- Sp xu and damp
- severe def. of yin, blood, or jing/marrow

22.

Thready/fine pulse

Description: its primary characteristic is thinness
it is also soft and weak (vs. wiry)
but it is clearer than the wei mai

Indicates:

- blood & yin deficiency
- blood & qi deficiency
(normal during autumn)

24.

Trembling/agitated pulse

Description: fast, tight, slippery & short
feels like a bean rolling around

Indicates:

- yin & yang struggle
(the vanquished aspect is writhing)
(shock, extreme anxiety, or fear prevent
qi & yang from circulating properly)

26.

Knotted pulse

Description: slowish & irregular

Indicates:

- obstruction of qi & blood d/t cold
- Ht yang xu

28.

Racing/urgent pulse

Description: seven/eight beats per respiration

Indicates:

- excessive heat/fire,
exhausting the body's yin

21.

Scattered pulse

Description: feels diffuse; big, but without strength
it is indistinct & disappears with pressure

Indicates:

- severe deficiency
- injury to yuan or Kd qi

23.

Hidden pulse

Description: very deep, only found close to the bone
even then seems to arise from below

Indicates:

- severe insufficiency of yang
- extreme cold obstructing
(pathogens are trapped)

25.

Hasty pulse

Description: rapid & irregular

Indicates:

- obstruction of qi & blood d/t fire
- Ht qi xu

27.

Intermittent pulse

Description: skips, pauses, then resumes,
at regular intervals

Indicates:

- deficiency of yuan qi & yang
- weakness of the zang

29.

Even pulse

Description: yǒu shén / has spirit = clear & regular
yǒu wèi / has stomach = smooth & supple
yǒu gēn / has root = felt down to the bone
and five beats per respiration

Indicates:

- Ht qi & blood is ample
- Sp/ST qi is robust
- good foundation of Kd qi & jing

脈經 / 脉经

Mài Jīng = Pulse Classic
by Wang Shu-he ~300

脈學 / 脉学

Mài Xué = Pulse Study
by Li Shi-zhen ~1600