

The 28 Pulse Qualities and Their Descriptions

Taken from The Secret of Chinese Pulse Diagnosis by Bob Flaws, adopted by Flaws from Li Shi Zhen's Lakeside Master's Study of the Pulse

1. Floating Pulse.

Located in the exterior. With finger raised, it has a surplus; when pressing down, it is insufficient. When pressure is released, it regains its full strength

2. Drumskin Pulse.

Bowstring and large with an empty center; feels like the head of a drum. The drumskin pulse is a floating pulse.

3. Surging Pulse.

Floating, large; comes on exuberant, departs debilitated.

4. Vacuous Pulse.

A) A generalized term for various types of forceless pulses B) A floating, large, slow, empty, soft forceless pulse

5. Scallion-stalk Pulse.

Floating, soft, large body, but empty center; feels like a scallion. Very similar to the drumskin pulse, but with no bowstring quality

6. Scattered Pulse.

It is floating, large, and without root; with light pressure, it is easily irregular, becoming scattered and chaotic. Heavy pressure leads to its absence.

7. Soft Pulse/Soggy Pulse.

Flatting, fine, soft, and flexible. Can be felt with light pressure, but cannot be obtained by heavy pressure.

8. Deep Pulse.

Located near the bone. Cannot be detected with light or moderate pressure, but can be felt with heavy pressure.

9. Weak Pulse.

Deep, fine, soft like a thread.

10. Hidden Pulse.

Difficult to feel, under the sinews, not obvious, requires heavy pressure to the bone to obtain.

11. Confined Pulse.

Pressed superficially or moderately, does not respond, but can be obtained by heavy pressure. Hard, firm, not changeable, replete, large, bowstring, and long.

12. Slow Pulse.

Below 60 BPM

13. Moderate/Relaxed Pulse.

A) As a healthy pulse, it is harmonious, relaxed, and forceful. B) As a disease pulse, it is relaxed, loose, slack, and on the verge of slow. It comes right at about 60 BPM

14. Rapid Pulse.

Above 90 BPM.

15. Racing Pulse.

Above 120 BPM

16. Replete Pulse.

A) A generalized term for various types of forceful pulses B) A long, bowstring, large, hard, and replete pulse which has a surplus either floating or deep.

17. Bowstring Pulse.

Fine, long, has strength, feels like a zither string.

18. Tight Pulse.

Tight, has strength, feels like a taut rope.

19. Long Pulse.

Long, can be felt beyond its location or range

20. Short Pulse.

Does not reach (i.e. fill longitudinally) its location or range

21. Stirring Pulse.

Slippery, rapid, forceful; feels like a bean.

22. Slippery Pulse.

Comes smoothly flowing and uninhibited; feels smooth like pearls rolling in a dish.

23. Choppy Pulse.

Slow, relaxed, stagnant, difficult, fine, may stop and lose a beat but then recovers. It is not smoothly flowing. It feels like a piece of bamboo scraped by a knife.

24. Fine Pulse.

Soft, feels like a silken thread, weak, without strength, but persistent.

25. Faint Pulse.

Insufficient, extremely fine, soft, barely palpable. It may sometimes be felt and then sometimes is lost.

26. Large Pulse.

Large, fills up fingertip, forceful.

27. Bound Pulse.

Slow, relaxed, stops at irregular intervals

28. Regularly Interrupted Pulse.

Comparatively relaxed and weak; stops at regular intervals. These intervals may be strikingly long.