

ACUPRESSURE

from Trauma Healing and Transformation, Chapter 3, p. 46-55

Acupressure is an ancient art using finger pressure on specific points to unblock, balance, or increase the circulation of life force energy in the body. The roots of acupressure date back over four thousand years to traditional Chinese medicine. Hands-on folk remedies were passed down from generation to generation to cure illness and relieve pain. In many indigenous cultures, grassroots people have traditions of rubbing or pressing areas of the body to relieve pain or emotional discomfort. A variety of systems based on acupressure points and Chinese meridian theory have developed in recent years for both self-help and professional therapeutic treatment of others. Recent research has shown that acupressure can be effective for treating symptoms of stress. The points demonstrated in the following section may be done on oneself, or with another person. The points chosen for the book are ones that are known to be effective for relief of traumatic stress symptoms: nervousness, anxiety, insomnia, sleep disorders, chronic pain, headaches, back pain, depression, fatigue, memory loss, dizziness, general body pain, etc. The points can be used whenever symptoms occur, or even better, as a daily preventive practice for maintaining balanced energy flow in the body. The flow of energy through meridians nourishes and balances the entire body. When this flow is restricted or blocked, physical or emotional sickness or pain results. With traumatic stress, energy is blocked or frozen in the tissues and muscles. Tension in the muscles usually indicates a blockage of energy that has accumulated around an acupressure point. The point can be located by feeling for tension which appears as a tight area in the muscle or a knot surrounding the point. When the acupressure point is held, the tension releases, permitting energy to flow more freely through the tense area, allowing the body to heal and balance itself naturally.

Self-Acupressure

The following self-acupressure points may be held while seated or lying in a comfortable position. The points may also be held while on the job, or wherever you are, whenever there is pain or discomfort. If you are able to, close your eyes and press the acupressure points for two to three minutes. Children need only about a minute for holding the points to clear and balance their energy. Their bodies have fewer blockages than adults. Press firmly into the point, then lighten the pressure until you begin to feel a pulsation or energy flow. Don't worry if you can't feel the energy pulse. After a while your fingers will get accustomed to finding the pulse. The energy is flowing whether or not you feel it. Often acupressure points are painful or sensitive. This is normal and is considered to be "good pain" that wants to be released. You know you are finished holding a point when there is a change in the quality of the pulsation. The energy pulse feels clear, strong, and balanced. You can enhance the energy flow by using visualization and deep breathing while doing self-acupressure. When you hold the point imagine that golden energy is circulating through the points and throughout your entire body bringing harmony and balance to your whole being. Breathe deeply and imagine the flow of golden energy. As you exhale, breathe out all the tension and pain associated with the point you are holding.

Suggestions for Self-Use

With traumatic stress, energy is blocked in different parts of the body. The following points are effective for healing many kinds of symptoms and for opening and rebalancing energy flow. They may be held in bed before sleeping or before rising, while seated at your desk or place of work, on the bus, or anywhere you happen to be. They can be used with meditative music to calm and center you. When holding the points close your eyes, breathe slowly and deeply, letting go of all tension, thoughts, and worries. Hold the points for 3 to 5 minutes until the energy pulse is calm, clear, and harmonious. After some practice your fingers will intuitively know when you are finished. Acupressure can be part of a daily routine or preventive practice. Traditional Chinese names are given for points along with meridians and numbers.

Head and Neck Points

- **Gates of Consciousness** (GB 20)

Use for: Trauma, hypertension, dizziness, irritability, neck pain, shock, migranes, and headaches. These points can also be used to balance left and right (rational and creative) sides of the brain.

To Locate: Interlace your fingers, place your hands behind your head, and with your thumbs press the two points at left and right sides of the base of the skull in the indentation between the muscles and bones.

- **Heavenly Pillar** (B 10)

Use for: Stress, burnout, exhaustion, heaviness in the head, depression, distress, anxiety.

To Locate: These points are located approximately a half an inch below the base of the skull between the muscles of the neck, about one half inch outward from either side of the spine.

- **Points at the Top of the Head** (GV 19, GV 20, GV 21)

Use for: Depression, headaches, vertigo, loss of memory.

To Locate: Find the hollow in the center of the top of the skull. The three points are located in a line in this area. These three points may be held or rubbed at the same time. Place your fingertips of both hands on the center of the head and rub the points briskly for a minute.

- **Wind Mansion** (GV 16)

Use for: Mental stress, headaches, and stiff neck.

To Locate: This point is found at the base of the skull at the center of the back of the head.

- **Third Eye Point** (GV 24.5)

Use for: Depression, nervousness, and emotional imbalance, and to bring a sense of calm and well-being.

To Locate: Feel for a sensitive area in the indentation between the eyebrows where the nose connects with the forehead.

Back Points

- **Heavenly Rejuvenation** (TW 15)

Use for: Nervous tension, stiff necks and worry stored in the shoulders.

To Locate: Find in the upper shoulder area about a half inch below the top of the shoulders midway between the neck and the arm socket.

- **Shoulder Well** (GB 21)

Use for: Anxiety, fatigue, shoulder tension, irritability, nervous problems, headaches, fatigue, poor circulation.

To Locate: Located on the highest point of the shoulders about two inches out from the neck. Pregnant women should press these lightly.

- **Vital Diaphragm** (B 38)

Use for: Anxiety, grief, emotional imbalance.

To Locate: Find between the shoulder blades and spine at the level of the heart. You may have to hold one at a time if you are not able to reach your back. These points are very sensitive and sometimes feel like a knife in the back.

- **Sea of Vitality** (B 23, B 47)

Use for: Depression, fatigue, exhaustion, trauma, fear.

To Locate: Look for these two sets of points at waist level of the back approximately two- and four-fingers distance out on either side of the spine. You can use your fists for these points.

Chest Points

- **Elegant Mansion** (K 27)

Use for: Depression, anxiety, chest congestion.

To Locate: Find in the indentation at the lower edge of the collarbone, on either side of the sternum by the first rib.

- **Letting Go** (Lu 1)

Use for: Depression, grief, repressed emotion, chest tension, and shallow breath.

To Locate: Locate in a sensitive area in the outer part of the upper chest near the arm socket, a distance of approximately four fingers from the arm pit.

- **Sea of Tranquility** (CV 17)

Use for: Nervousness, grief, depression, hysteria, emotional imbalance, and chest congestion.

To Locate: Find in the center of the sternum at the level of the nipples.

Abdominal Points

- **Sea of Energy** (CV 6)

Use for: Dizziness, weakness, fatigue, confusion, pain in abdominal muscles, constipation, diarrhea.

To Locate: Look for this point approximately three inches below the navel.

Leg and Foot Points

- **Three Miles More** (St 36)

Use for: Depression, fatigue, strengthening the whole body, balancing the emotions. They are good for exhaustion when you can no longer continue. Their name comes from the ability to walk three miles more after pressing the points.

To Locate: Look for these two points approximately four fingers distance below the kneecap about an inch outside the shinbone. These points are found between the muscles and the leg bones and are usually very sensitive.

- **Supreme Rushing** (Lv 3)

Use for: Fatigue, dizziness, confusion, irritability, nausea, and headaches.

To Locate: Find on the top of the foot in the indentation between the big toe and the second toe.

- **Joyful Sleep** (K 6)

Use for: Insomnia, hypertension, anxiety, and ankle pain.

To Locate: Locate in the indentation below the inside of the anklebone.

Arm and Hand Points

- **Spirit Gate** (H 7)

Use for: Emotional imbalance, fear, nervousness, anxiety, and loss of memory.

To Locate: Look for these two points on the outside of the forearm below the little finger by the crease of the wrist.

- **Inner Gate** (P 6)

Use for: Anxiety, nausea, insomnia, palpitations, nervousness, and stress.

To Locate: Measure approximately two and a half fingers distance from the wrist crease in the middle of the inner forearm.

- **Calm Sleep** (B 62)

Use for: Insomnia and back pain.

To Locate: Find below the outer ankle bone in the indentation.

- **Hoku—Joining the Valley** (LI 4)

Use for: Upper body pain, headaches, head congestion, and constipation.

To Locate: Find deep in the muscle between the thumb and index finger on the top of the hand. These points are very sensitive and should not be used by pregnant women, except at the time of labor, because they cause contractions of the uterus.

- **Immune Points—Crooked Pond** (LI 11)

Use for: Boosting the immune system, for colds, fever, constipation, and elbow pain.

To Locate: Look for these two points at the outer edge of the elbow crease.

Resources for Further Study

Books

Gach, M. Acupressure's Potent Points. NY: Bantam Books, 1990.

Korngold, E. & Beinfield H.. Between Heaven and Earth: A Guide to Chinese Medicine. NY: Ballentine, 1991.

Mehling, B. & Pendleton B. Relax with Self-Therap/Ease. Calabasas, CA: California Pubs., 1976.

Raheem, A. Soul Return, Lower Lake, CA: Aslan Publishing, 1987.

———Process Acupressure I, Process Acupressure II. Upledger Institute, 1995.

Teegarden, I. Acupressure Way of Health: Jin Shin Do. NY: Japan Publications, 1978.

———The Joy of Feeling: Bodymind Acupressure Jin Shin Do. NY: Japan Publications, 1987.

Music to use during Acupressure

Babbling Brook. Interludes, Great American Audio, New Rochelle, NY.

Quiet Heart, Spirit Wind. Bamboo & Alto Flutes. Richard Warner. Enso Records.

Guided Tapes with Music

Acupressure Institute, 1533 Shattuck Avenue Berkeley, CA 94709, 510-845-1059

Contacts

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