

Acupressure for Chronic Pain

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Description: Acupressure is an ancient healing art developed in China. It works with the same points (Acupoints) used in acupuncture, but it stimulates these healing sites with finger pressure, instead of fine needle insertion, to open the energy blockage. It is also called “Acupuncture without needles.”

In this class, we will cover the basic method of Acupressure and the application of using key points in the relief of ailments and pains, in self-treatment, and in preventive health care.

How does Acupressure work? The classic Chinese explanation is that a life-energy, called Qi, circulates in meridians throughout the body. If the Qi is blocked, disease can occur. Acupressure is a method to balance the flow of Qi. It has been shown to stimulate the nervous system and release chemicals that affect pain.

How to do it: Start by finding the location of the relevant Acupressure points (see below). Try to calm your mind, relax your body and focus your mind on what you are doing. Using your thumbs or fingers, apply firm pressure on each point, release and repeat it. You can also apply a moving pressure in a circular motion with your fingers. Find the point that works for you, and do this 15-30 minutes or until you feel the benefits.

Caution: Don’t apply pressure to an open wound, or to a place where there is inflammation or swelling. Avoid any areas that have scar tissue, boils, blisters, rashes, or varicose veins.

Ah-Shi points are pain points around the injured area. The Ah-Shi points are always a good place to start. Just gently press around the problem area.

Pain and Acupressure Points:

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| Neck Pain: GB20, GB21, UB11 | Lower Back Pain: UB23, UB40, GB30 |
| Shoulder Pain: Si11, UB11, GB21 | Abdominal Pain: ST36, SP6, LV3, PC6 |
| Headache, Stress, Depression: GB20, Taiyang, YinTang, LV3 | Ankle Pain, Plantar Fasciitis: Ki3, UB60, ST41 |
| Elbow Pain: Li11 | Overactive Bladder: Ki3, SP6 |
| Wrist Pain: PC6, Li11 | Facial Pain; TMJ: Li4, GB20 |
| Knee Pain: Xiyan, SP9, ST36 | Pre-menstrual Syndrome (PMS): SP6, LV3, Li4 |
| Nausea, Vomiting and Motion Sickness: PC6, ST36 | Nasal Allergy: Bitong, Yitang, Li4 |
| Hip Pain: GB31, GB30 | Muscle cramp: UB57 |

Acupressure Point Locations:

- **Yintang:** At the midpoint between the two medial ends of the eyebrow.
- **Taiyang:** At temple, one thumb width behind the bony margin of the eye, on a line from the eye to the top of the ear.
- **Bitong:** In the small hollow on the side of the bridge of the nose.
- **Xiyan:** The inside dimple of the knee joint below the kneecap, either side of the ligament.
- **ST36:** Four finger widths below the kneecap, one finger width to the outside of the shinbone. If you are on the correct spot, a muscle should flex as you move your foot up and down.
- **SP9:** On the inside of the leg, just below the bulge that is down from the inside of the knee and under the head of the shinbone.
- **ST41:** In the middle of the foot, in front of the ankle joint.
- **LV3:** On the top of the foot in the valley between the big toe and the second toe.
- **GB20:** Below the base of the skull, in the hollow between the two large, vertical neck muscles, two to three inches apart depending on the size of the head.
- **UB11:** Two finger widths either side of the spine, level with the first and second thoracic vertebrae.
- **GB21:** At the highest point of the shoulder muscle, one to two inches from the side of the lower neck.
- **Si11:** In a depression of the scapula.
- **Li11:** On the upper edge of the elbow crease.
- **UB23:** In the lower back (between the second and third lumbar vertebrae) two fingers widths away from the spine.
- **Li4:** In the webbing between the thumb and index finger at the highest spot of the muscle when the thumb and index finger are brought close together.
- **GB30:** In the center of each buttock, in back of the most prominent part of the upper thigh bone.
- **GB31:** On the outside of the thigh, 7 thumb widths above the outside crease of the knee joint.
- **UB40:** In the center of the back of the knee crease.
- **UB57:** In the middle of the back of the calf at the junction of the muscle and tendon.
- **UB60:** In the hollow between the outer anklebone and the Achilles tendon.
- **Ki1:** On sole of the foot in the center between the two pads.
- **SP6:** Four fingers widths above the inner anklebone on the back inner border of the shinbone.
- **Ki3:** In the hollow midway between the protrusion of the inside anklebone and the Achilles tendon, which joints the back of the calf to the back of the heel.
- **PC6:** In the middle of the inner wrist, two-and one-half finger widths below the wrist crease.

Acupressure Point Locations

By Jason Liang, L.Ac.

