

Acupressure for Stress Management

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While many traditional medical systems use stimulation on specific areas of the body to promote healing, acupressure based in Chinese medicine theory is the most well known. Acupressure uses the same acupoints as acupuncture, can be performed on oneself or on others, and is safe, effective, and easy to learn. By stimulating acupoints we can...

- Reduce current symptoms and prevent or reduce future symptoms
- Promote calm, self-healing, and self-regulation
- Combine with deep breathing and other self-care techniques to promote relaxation and increase efficacy

Self-acupressure not only helps to relieve symptoms – it is an empowering opportunity to give yourself time, attention, and care.

Common Uses of Acupressure

- Anxiety, depressed mood, emotional stress
- Headache, pain, tension
- Insomnia, sleep disturbances, fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting, bowel irregularities
- Reproductive health and menstrual concerns
- Promoting general health and wellbeing

Acupressure Basics

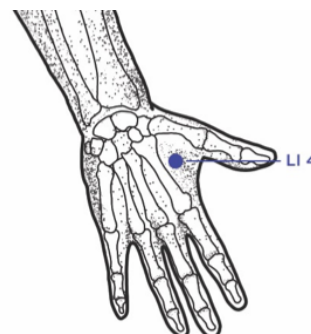
- Acupoints are bilateral, except for points located on the midline of the body
- Apply pressure with thumb or finger, at an approximately 90-degree angle to the skin
- Pressure should be firm, steady, and noticeable - but still comfortable!
- Start with lighter pressure and gradually increase, based on comfort level
- Gentle rubbing, massage, or tapping can also be used to stimulate points
- Start with 30 seconds, and gradually increase to 1-2 minutes, based on tolerance
- Perform once or multiple times daily, for both symptom management and prevention
- Avoid broken or blistered skin, broken bones, bruising, wounds, or irritation

Acupressure Points for Wellbeing

Illustrations from Voss, M. E., Christensen, K., Anderson, M., & Hanscom, K. (2020). Integrative Nursing: Acupressure Acupoint Locations & Common Indications. (K. Hanscom, Illus.) Regents of the University of Minnesota.

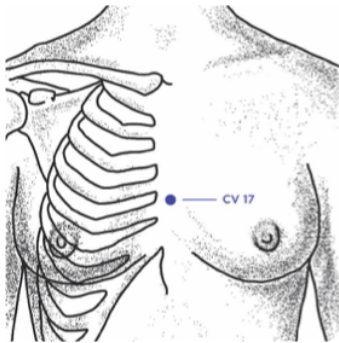
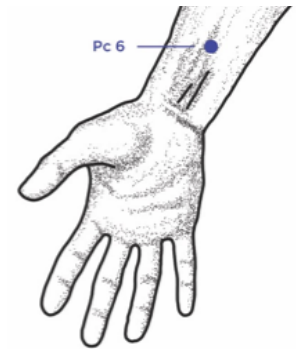
Large Intestine 4 (*He Gu*, or Junction Valley)

- Common uses: anxiety, emotionality, headache, pain, sinus congestion
- Location: This point is located on the dorsal aspect of the hand, in the web between the thumb and pointer finger.
- *This point should be avoided in pregnancy.*



Pericardium 6 (*Nei Guan*, or Inner Gate)

- Common uses: anxiety, headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, heartburn
- Location: This point is located on the arm, three finger breadths from the wrist crease on the inner forearm in between the palmaris longus and flexor carpi radialis tendons

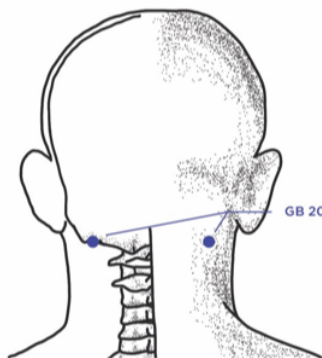
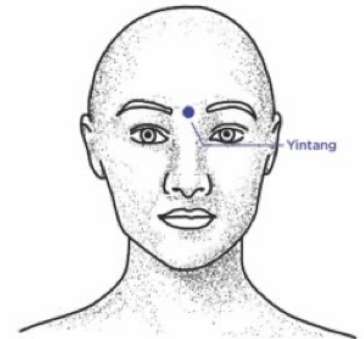


Conception Vessel 17 (*Dan Zhong*, or Chest Center)

- Common uses: anxiety, grief, depressed mood, chest tension, cough
- Location: This point is located on the chest, in the center of the sternum on the midline, in a slight depression at the level of the fourth intercostal space. In some people, this point is roughly at the nipple line.

Yintang (Hall of Impression)

- Common uses: anxiety, insomnia, headache, sinus congestion
- Location: This point is located on the face in between the inner edges of the two eyebrows, on the midline of the face.

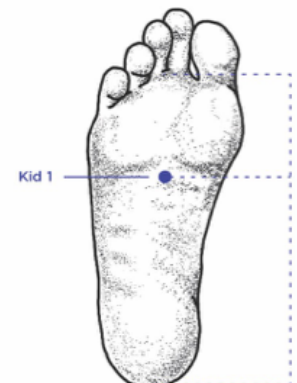


Gall Bladder 20 (*Feng Chi*, or Wind Pool)

- Common uses: headache, migraine, facial pain, eye irritation, cold symptoms, pain and tension of the neck, shoulders, and upper back
- Location: The point is located inferior to the occiput, in the depression between the sternocleidomastoid and trapezius muscles.

Kidney 1 (*Yuan Quan*, or Gushing Spring)

- Common uses: anxiety, agitation, headache, dizziness, feeling “ungrounded”, foot pain, poor sleep
- Location: This point is located on the bottom of the foot, 1/3 of the way between the base of the toes and the heel, in the depression just behind the ball of the foot
- Tip: Rolling out this point with a ball is a great way to stimulate!



Want to learn more about acupressure through the University of Minnesota?

Register for CSPH 5313 Acupressure or sign up for the free Coursera Acupressure Essentials course!