

## Acupuncture & Acupressure

Acupuncture is an ancient Chinese medical procedure involving insertion and manipulation of needles at more than 360 points in the human body. It is applied to relieve rheumatic pain and to treat many other illnesses.

Acupuncture today is used in most hospitals in China and by some private practitioners in Japan, Europe and the United States.

It was developed in response to the theory that there are special “meridian points” on the body connected to the internal organs, and that “vital energy” flows along the meridian lines. According to this theory, diseases are caused by interrupted energy flow, and inserting and twirling needles would restore the normal flow once again.

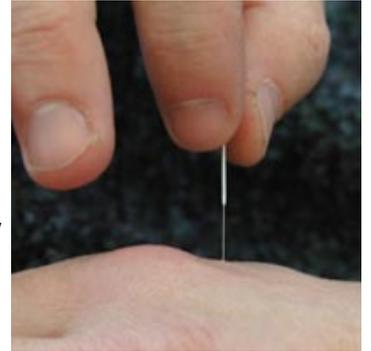
Headaches occurring right before, during or after menstruation are normal symptoms along with the menstrual cycle. However, in a balanced body, this should not be happening. Acupuncture can be very effective in treating headaches and keeping them from reoccurring as it balances the endocrine system responsible for hormonal balances and imbalances and helps the body perform its functions smoothly. Liver meridian imbalances commonly cause headaches that occur before or during menstruation.

Acupuncture can help smooth and anchor the liver and hence calm headaches. Liver Blood Deficiency is usually the reason of headaches occurring after menstruation (they tend to be duller with some dizziness) for which applying acupuncture can be quite effective as well.

Arthritis is a very common disorder now and some of the ways of treating it is by acupuncture. The most common symptoms of arthritis involve pain, stiffness and swelling around the joints or soft tissue. This can contribute to difficulty in practicing daily activities that require movement. Other symptoms may include fatigue, fevers, depression and weight gain. There are internal and external causes which can contribute to arthritis, the external ones are pathogenic factors such as wind and coldness which affect the normal flow of vital energy and blood hence resulting in swelling, stiffness and numbness of the joints and soft tissues. Whereas internal causes may involve emotional stress weakening one’s immune system and depletion of the Kidney vital system resulting in degeneration of one’s bones, tendons and cartilage. Through acupuncture you can restore the balance of the vital energy flow within the body which will enable an emotional balance and a fortification of the kidney meridians. Often localized acupuncture therapy applied directly on the joint or tissue itself can be extremely helpful to manage the arthritis if conducted by a professional practitioner. It is interesting to note that people with arthritis problems should avoid dairy products as much as possible, as well as red meat, processed foods, caffeine and alcohol.

In addition to pain relief, acupuncture is also used to improve well being and treat acute, chronic, and degenerative conditions in children and adults.

Acupuncture needles have been used as far back as 4,000 years ago in China. The first needles were made of stone – later, bronze, gold, or silver needles were used. Today, needles are usually made of steel.



### Acupressure

Acupressure is an ancient Chinese healing method that involves applying pressure to certain meridian points on the body to relieve pain. These meridians start at the fingertips and connect to the brain which in turn is connected to the organ associated with the specific

meridian. By relieving stress, acupressure strengthens resistance to diseases and promotes wellness. Acupressure is believed to be the 'mother of Acupuncture' in that it predates the use of needles to stimulate the body's energy flow.

It deals with all the aspects of a person as a whole: body, emotions, mind and spirit as one, not as separate parts, hence it is one of the alternative healings arts dealing in a "holistic" way with the person. It relaxes muscular tension and balances the vital life forces of the body to aid the healing.

It is very similar to acupuncture but instead of using needles, the practitioner uses energy by applying pressure from his fingers, thumbs or knuckles for vital energy stimulation and pain relief. The advantages of using acupressure are relieving pain, balancing the body and maintaining good health in general.

The most common diseases treated by acupressure are back pain, arthritis, intestinal problems, asthma, sinus congestions and many others. Acupressure therapists can also stimulate certain acupressure points during pregnancy to get rid of or minimize the vomiting and nausea sensation or you can even do it yourself by applying a very mild pressure 3 finger width above the transverse groove of the inner wrist. You should place your finger at this point until you feel the symptom is relieved (usually within 5 minutes). This can be applied for mild feelings of nausea during pregnancy.

After an acupressure treatment, you will probably feel more relaxed. You may experience a slight aches, yet, you shouldn't be in pain. Within three to eight visits you would be able to know whether the treatment is working for your ailment. Stress management usually requires a series of about six regular (weekly or monthly) treatments.

There are some things which you might want to pay attention to when you are getting acupressure treatments:

Avoid acupressure in the area of a known tumor.

Acupressure should not be applied directly over the lymph nodes.

There are certain acupressure points that must be avoided during pregnancy, hence, you need to be sure if you are pregnant or not when you are having acupressure treatments and you need to tell your practitioner.

There are several kinds of acupressure which are practiced and taught all using the same ancient trigger points. There are varying rhythms, pressures, and techniques which create different styles of acupressure. Shiatsu, the most well-known style of acupressure (widely practiced in Japan) can be quite vigorous by applying firm pressure to each point of the body for only three to five seconds. Practitioners may use their whole arms on a certain point to unblock its congested flow. While the Jin Shin style of acupressure gently holds each point for a minute or more.

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