

# Acupuncture is a Safe and Natural Way to Help You Handle Stress

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**T**he dictionary defines stress in multiple ways, but there is only one that matters when we discuss how stress affects our physical bodies. Stress is defined as a physical, chemical or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Stress actually does have a function in our bodies, it's the body's way of signaling for help or a break in the routine. If we don't listen to these signals, we can develop imbalances in our bodies, which can lead to a variety of illnesses.

Cortisol is the hormone most closely related to stress. Cortisol is a big component of the "fight or flight" response we feel when we are scared or threatened. In small bursts, cortisol is helpful. However, when stress becomes chronic, then the cortisol levels become elevated. This puts the body in a constant state of being on edge, eventually causing insomnia, depression, anxiety, digestive issues and mental illness.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) provides many ways of combating stress and keeping our minds focused. Here are a few examples of how this ancient medical system can help.

**Acupuncture for Stress:** Acupuncture acts like physical therapy for the nervous system. The tiny needles retrain the nervous system and the brain to behave as it should normally. For the nervous system to act and respond accordingly, cortisol has to be at normal levels and only used when a true "fight or flight" situation occurs. Studies show acupuncture does this.

Acupuncture also helps reduce stress by keeping the heart rate normal. When the body is stressed, the heart tends to pump faster and in some cases, a person may even develop palpitations. The heart rate is closely connected to the vagus nerve. If the vagus nerve is stimulated, the heart rate will increase. There are specific acupressure points on the body that can calm the vagus nerve and the heart.



## Acupuncture Points for Stress:

- **Yin Tang** - Yin Tang is located directly between the inner edges of the eyebrows. It is a reflex point of the pituitary gland. Yin Tang calms the mind and relaxes the body by helping control hormone secretions.
- **Du 20** - This point is located on the top of the head, midway between the apexes of both ears. Du 20 has been noted to improve mental clarity and awareness, while also enhancing memory.

**Chinese Herbal Formulas for Stress:** Combinations of herbs, known as formulas are used frequently in TCM. Xiao Yao San is a popular TCM formula used frequently to address stress. This formula is known as "Free and Easy Wanderer" because it helps remove any stagnation in the energetic pathways that can lead to stress and difficulty focusing or staying on task.

**Nutrition for Stress:** Proper nutrition is vital for everyone. But when it comes to stress and focus, nutrition for the kidneys is crucial. The kidneys are the source of our vital essence and if they are damaged, our health will suffer. Foods like black beans, kidney beans, asparagus, plums, blueberries and blackberries are all beneficial for strengthening the kidneys. When the kidneys are strong, we are better prepared to handle and deal with stress.

If you are having difficulties dealing with stress, contact Acupuncture & Natural Health Solutions, and make an appointment to come in and de-stress. We have a variety of ways to address how stress is affecting you, personally. We customize all of our treatments, so it is not a "one size fits all" protocol at our office. You can call us at, **239-260-4566** or schedule online at [acupuncturesolutionsonline.com](http://acupuncturesolutionsonline.com) and click the "schedule now" button to save 15% off your first appointment.