

5 Acupoints TO HELP YOU *navigate* YOUR *stress* THIS WINTER



How Acupuncture Reduces Stress - Research Update

A study published in the *Annals of Yoga and Physical Therapy* looked at how acupuncture treatments affect stress levels in administrative workers at a local hospital. The study included 58 participants who reported high levels of stress associated with their jobs. The participants were treated with eight weeks of auricular (ear) acupuncture. After the eight sessions, the workers reported their stress levels had decreased from high levels to moderate levels.

The study hypothesizes that reduced stress levels are associated with regular acupuncture treatments due to the release of neurotransmitters (feel good chemicals) in the body. This study and many others are providing evidence that acupuncture can indeed decrease stress levels and improve overall health.

Stress is defined as either pressure or tension exerted on an object or a state of mental or emotional strain resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances.

Facts from the Global Organization for Stress:

- Americans report higher levels of stress than most countries around the globe.
- Surveys show that nearly 1 in 75 people worldwide experience panic attacks.
- Stress in American teenagers is now one of the top health concerns and it is being found that teenagers experiencing stress are more likely to develop long-term health problems.
- We all experience stress in our lives, but learning how to deal with it can be crucial for a happy, healthy life.

One way to deal with stress involves the use of a 3,000 year old medical system, known as Traditional Chinese Medicine or TCM. TCM uses many different modalities or tools to treat the mind and body.

The most commonly used modality is acupuncture and while acupuncture is still not widely accepted in the United States, it is gaining ground.

Studies show acupuncture can reduce stress when used regularly. The Journal of Endocrinology published a study showing stress hormones, like cortisol, were lower in rats that received electroacupuncture. The use of electroacupuncture actually blocked the chronic stress hormones in the rats. It does the exact same thing for humans.

Stress Reducing Acupuncture Points:

1. Yin Tang (Du 24.5) (3rd Eye Chakra) - This point is located about one finger above the point between the eyebrows and will be almost directly in the middle of the forehead. Working this point is said to calm the mind, clarify ideas and intuition as well as strengthen mental projection. It can be used to alleviate dizziness, stress, vertigo, sinusitis and headaches.

2. Hegu (LI 4) - The LI 4 point moves qi (the energy of the body). When we are stressed, the qi gets stuck leading to negative feelings. When we get the stuck energy moving, you feel an emotional release. LI4 is also known to treat swelling and pain of the eye, nasal obstruction, toothache, facial swelling, deafness, sore throat and much more. In TCM, it's said to dispel exterior wind, stimulate the dispersing function of the lungs, removes pain, and harmonizing descending and ascending functions. This point is located on the back of the hand at the apex of the webbed triangle between the thumb and the index finger.

3. Zhong Fu (Lu 1) - The lung meridian has to do with unresolved grief. If your stress is related to grief, Lung 1 can be helpful. This point has other properties as well and is often used to treat vomiting, stops coughing, disperses fullness in the chest, stops pain and regulates Lung Qi. It's located in the upper chest in the space below the first rib, in the crease where the arm attaches to the body.

4. Zu San Li (St36) - This acupoint is often used when stress affects digestion. If nausea and vomiting are symptoms that you experience when you are stressed, St36 can be a great point to use. This point is located along the outside of your shin bone about 4 finger widths below the knee cap. You will know you're in the right location because a muscle will pop out as you move your foot up and down. In TCM, this point is stimulated frequently to promote health and longevity.

5. Yongquan (Kid 1) - Kidney 1 is located on the bottom of the foot, at the junction of anterior one third and posterior two thirds of the line connecting the base of the second and third toes and the heel. This point is VERY sensitive, but it has amazing properties. Kidney 1, is not used very often because of its location, however, it can work wonders for decreasing stress. Kidney 1 can sedate and calm the mind, while also regulating blood flow to the brain.

It is important to understand that acupuncture is not the only form of treatment and having a healthy diet, exercise regime, a meditation practice and balanced lifestyle will also decrease the chances of stress being a factor in your life.

2020 was filled with many unforeseen challenges. If you feel overwhelmed with stress, acupuncture can help you reduce anxiety and irritability. We all know that stress that is ignored will turn into some sort of physical ailment that will worsen until you pay attention. I encourage you to seek treatment now, and prevent a decline in your health and emotions.



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