ACUPRESSURE SELF-HELP TO RELIEVE BACK TENSION, PAIN AND STIFFNESS

(1) Using a Tool to Reach Points on the Back

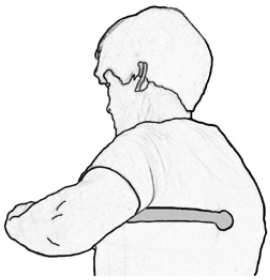


Figure 1 (back view)

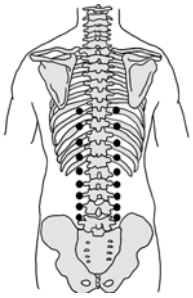
Various tools are available that allow you to apply pressure to hard to reach areas of the back. One of these tools is the Thera Cane®.

For areas of the mid-back, place the curved end of the Thera Cane under one arm. Position the ball at the end of the curve on your back. To apply pressure, push the other end of the tool away from your body (in Figure 2, you would push the right hand away from the body).

Apply pressure only to muscles, never to bone. The amount of pressure should be between pleasurable and painful. Increase pressure gradually.

Figure 2 (front view)

(2) Shiatsu Stretch for the Mid- and Low Back



Point Locations along the Spine

1. If you have a Thera Cane or other tool, press points between the bottom of the scapula and the top of the pelvic bone. The points are three fingers out from the spine. If you don't have a tool, wrap your hands around your sides (fingers pointing to the front) and press your thumbs into these points. Hold each point for three seconds and repeat two more times. If you use your hands, you can do both sides of the back at once or you can relax, lying on your side, and press one side at a time. Try to reach as close to the bottom of the shoulder blade as possible for the uppermost points.

2. Stretch the muscles in this area by moving your thumbs up and down at each point. Hold the stretch for three seconds in each direction. This can be done with your thumbs or a tool. With your thumbs, you will be able to feel the tightness of the muscles. Shake out your hands between each stretch to keep your hands and arms relaxed.

Step 1

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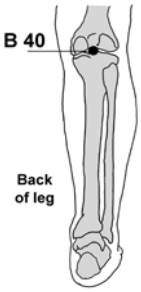
(3) The Most Important Point for Low Back Pain



For acute lower back pain, place one hand on the painful area and hold the center of the knee crease (BL 40, on the same side of the body) with your other hand. It's best to lie down and make yourself as comfortable as possible. You may need to hold for 20 minutes or more before the pain shifts. If the back pain moves to a different location, move your hand to the new location, keeping your other hand behind the knee crease.

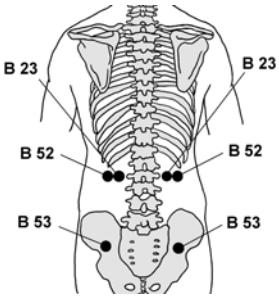
(4) Acupressure Flow for Lower Back Tensions

This flow is also good for tired legs. Holding this area of the body increases alertness, energy, and mental clarity. It's used for calming, soothing, and quietly regenerating all of the body's functions.

1. Sit with your hands under your "sitting" bones (the ischium of the pelvis), palms up or down. Hold.

Steps 1

(5) Acupressure Points for Low Back Pain and Sciatica



Here are the points you will use for this sequence. The location of each point is described in the following steps.

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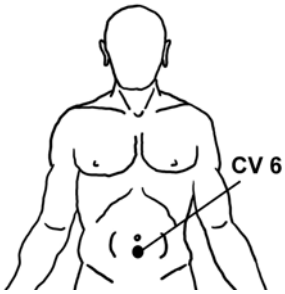

1. Press the knuckles of both hands into your lower back (at the level of your navel), two finger widths out from the spine (B 23). You can do this sitting in a chair or lying on the floor. Hold for one minute.

2. Wrap your fingers around your waist and press your thumbs into your back (B 52). B 52 is four fingers out from the spine at the level of the navel. Hold for at least one minute.

Step 1

Step 2

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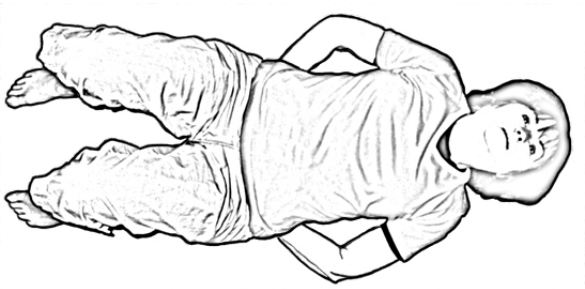
Step 3

3. Place your fingertips below the navel (two finger widths down), press into the abdomen (CV 6), and breathe deeply for one minute.



Step 4

4. Place your knuckles on your buttocks, four fingers out from the spine and halfway between the base of the buttocks and the top of the hip bone (B 53). Move your fists to areas of tension. If you are lying on the floor, you can rock the knees from side to side. Work this area for two minutes.

5. Hold behind the knee crease on both sides for one minute (see part 3, The Most Important Point for Low Back Pain). Repeat steps 1 and 2

(6) Acupressure Flow for General Backaches

Steps 1 & 2

This flow is also good for muscle cramps in the knees and calves.

1. For the left side of body, hold the left side of your neck with the fingertips of your right hand (hand goes behind the neck).

2. Place your left hand under your tailbone (palm can be up or down). Hold both hands on the body for a few minutes or until you feel a pulse.

Step 3

3. With your right hand still on your neck, place your left fingertips on the back of your left knee (center of knee crease, B 40). Hold.

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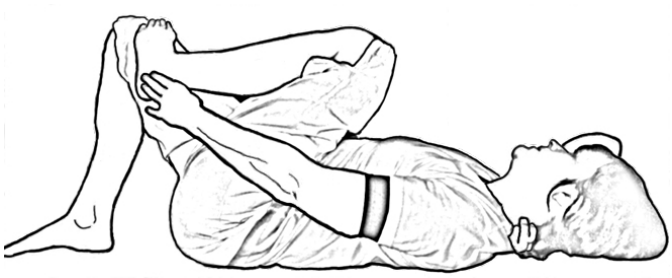

Step 4

4. With your right hand still on your neck, place your left hand on the area below your outer left ankle. Hold.

5. For the right side of body, follow steps 1 through 4 with the sides reversed (substituting right for left and left for right).

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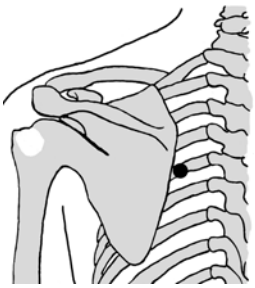
(6) Acupressure Flow for Upper and Middle Back Tensions

1. For the left side of body, place a knotted towel (or rubber ball) between the spine and shoulder blade at the mid-shoulder blade level of the left shoulder.



Step 1

Steps 2 & 3

2. Place your right fist under your left waist .

3. Keeping your right hand at the waist, place your left hand on the middle of the right inner thigh (halfway between the knee and the groin). Hold both hands on the body for a few minutes or until you feel a pulse.

4. Keeping your right hand at the waist, place your left hand on the outside of the right upper calf (feel for the bony knob at the top of the fibula, the bone of the outer foreleg). Hold both hands on the body for a few minutes or until you feel a pulse.

5. For the right side of body, follow steps 1 through 4 with the sides reversed (substituting right for left and left for right).

Step 4

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