

ACUPRESSURE SELF-HELP FOR NECK TENSION, PAIN, AND STIFFNESS, AND FOR HEADACHES

How to Hold Acupressure Points

How do I locate a point? Don't be concerned about the exact location of a point. Think of each point as being at the center of a circle that is the size of a silver dollar (about the width of three fingers). Holding anywhere in that circle will allow you to access and influence the point.

How much pressure should I use? Use only as much pressure as feels good. In acupressure we use an energetic touch, not pressure, to attract energy to the surface. Rest three fingers on a point with a relaxed touch.

How long should I hold a point? Until you feel 1) a softening of the muscle or tissue, 2) an increase in warmth, or 3) a pulse. When holding a series of points, you can hold each point for one minute

Points to avoid during pregnancy (the "forbidden" points)

GB 21, located on the top of the shoulders, three fingers out from the neck

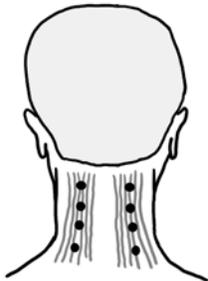
LI 4, located in the webbing between the thumb and index finger

SP 6, located four fingers up from the inner ankle bone, against the shin bone

BL 60, located behind the outer ankle

BL 67, located at the base of the little toe nail

(1) Shiatsu Stretch for the Back of the Neck



1. Place the index, middle, and ring fingers of each hand on either side of the neck muscle that runs along the spine. Your ring finger will be just below the skull and your index finger will be at the base of the neck. Press all three fingers towards the nose. Hold for three seconds. Repeat two more times.



Step 1



Step 2

2. Interlock the fingers of both hands and press your palms into the sides of the neck. Gradually lean the head forward, as if bowing. Feel the stretch go down between the shoulder blades. Hold in the stretched position for 10 seconds and return to the starting position. Repeat two more times.



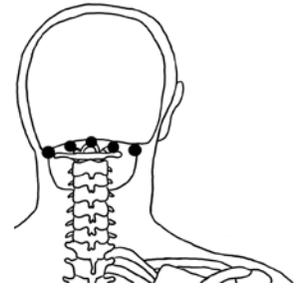
Backwards position of Step 3

3. Support the neck with interlocked fingers. Lean the head backwards, opposing the movement with your hands. Hold for 10 seconds. Return to the upright position, then gradually lean the head forward. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat this sequence, alternating front and back, two more times.

(2) Holding five points at the base of the skull



- o The first point is at the center, one thumb width above the hair line. Hold this point with the index and middle fingers of both hands. Press lightly on this point.
- o The first pair of points is on either side of the spine, at the edge of the muscle band. Press up against the bottom of the skull with your thumbs.
- o The second pair of points is in a hollow at the outer edge of the skull, just behind the ears and about level with the ear openings. Again, press up with your thumbs.

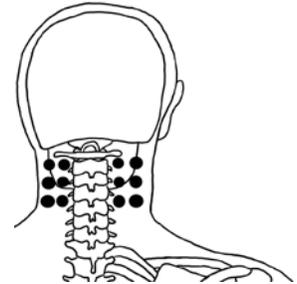


Do the sequence of five points twice. The first time softens the area. The second time allows you to go in a little deeper.

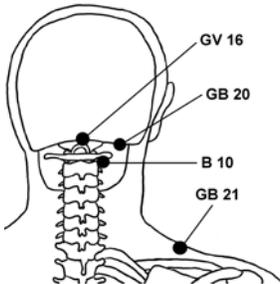
(3) Massaging down the sides of the neck



Using your fingertips, press along two parallel lines on each side of the neck, from the base of the skull to the bottom of the neck. The first line is along the muscle band surrounding the spine. The second line is directly under the hollow at the outer edge of the skull. Place your right hand behind your neck and pull the muscles on the left side of your neck towards the spine with your fingers. Repeat on the other side. Do both inner lines twice, then massage the outer lines twice.



(4) Acupressure Point Sequence for Neck Tension and Pain



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



Step 1

1. Hold both GB 21 points on the top of the shoulders. GB 21 is located three fingers out from the base of the neck. Hold for at least one minute.
2. Hold both B 10 points at the base of the skull. B 10 is half a thumb width below the hairline, on the edge of the neck muscles. Hold for one minute.



Step 2



Step 3

3. Use your thumbs to hold the two hollows at the base of the outer skull (GB 20). Hold for one minute or until you feel a pulse .

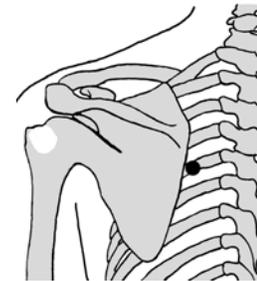
4. Place the fingertips of one hand at the center of the base of your skull (GV 16). With the other hand, hold the B 2 points at the inner end of the eyebrows. You may feel a slight indentation at the B 2 points. Hold for at least one minute.



Step 4

(5) Acupressure Flow for Neck And Back Tensions

1. For 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

2. Place your left fist under your right waist.

3. Place your right fingertips on the left side of your neck (hand goes behind neck). Hold both hands on the body for a few minutes or until you feel a pulse.



Steps 2 & 3

4. Move your left hand to the right hip crease (groin).

5. Move your right hand to the back of the left shoulder (near the neck). Hold both hands on the body for a few minutes or until you feel a pulse.

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



Steps 4 & 5

(6) Acupressure Flow for Neck And Shoulder Tensions



Steps 1 & 2

1. For left side of body, place your right hand in the right hip crease (groin).
2. Place your left fingertips (or thumb) on the instep of your right foot. Hold both hands on the body for a few minutes or until you feel a pulse.
3. Keeping your right hand in place, move your left hand to the back of the right shoulder (near the neck). Hold.



Step 3

4. Move your right hand to the left side of your neck (hand goes behind neck).
5. Move the left hand so the thumb is under the right cheekbone and the fingertips on the right forehead. Hold.
6. For right side of body, follow steps 1 through 5 with the sides reversed (substituting right for left and left for right).



Steps 4 & 5

(7) Acupressure Flow for Chronic Stiff Neck

1. For the right side, hold the right side of your neck with the fingertips of your left hand (hand goes behind neck).
2. Hold the left index finger between your right thumb and index finger. Hold both hands on the body for a few minutes or until you feel a pulse.



Steps 1 & 2

3. With your left hand still on your neck, place your right hand on your chest at the top of the right breast area (about four fingers down from the center of the right collar bone). Hold both hands on the body for a few minutes or until you feel a pulse.



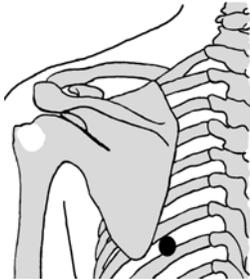
Step 3

4. With your left hand still on your neck, press under your left cheekbone with your right fingertips. Hold both hands on the body for a few minutes or until you feel a pulse.
5. For left side of body, follow steps 1 through 4 with the sides reversed (substituting right for left and left for right).



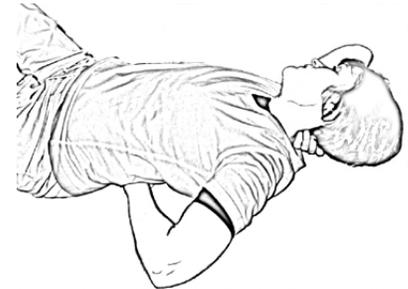
Step 4

(8) Acupressure Flow for Shoulder Blade and Mid-Back Pain, Neck Stiffness



Step 1

1. For left side of body, place a knotted towel (or rubber ball) between the spine and shoulder blade at the level of the bottom of the left shoulder blade.
2. Place your left fist (knuckles up) under your left waist.
3. Place the fingertips of your right hand on the left side of your neck (hand goes behind neck). Hold.
4. For right side of body, follow steps 1 through 3 with the sides reversed.



Steps 2 & 3

(9) Shiatsu Stretch for Headache

1. Apply gentle pressure with the fingertips to the area of the head where there is pain. Hold for 5 to 6 seconds. Next apply pressure to the same area with the palms. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat at least two more times. You may continue applying pressure until the pain is somewhat less severe.
2. Place the right and left hands on either side of the head at the temples. Apply pressure with both palms for 10 seconds. Repeat two more times.



Step 2

3. Place one hand on top of the other on top of the head, pressing downwards. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat two more times.



Step 3

4. Place the right and left hands on either side of the head at the temples. Move the hands up and hold for five seconds, then move the hands down and hold for five seconds. Repeat this up and down stretch nine more times.



Steps 4 & 5

5. With the hands in the same position as step 4, move the hands forward and hold for five seconds, then move the hands backwards and hold for five seconds. Repeat this forward and backward stretch nine more times.

6. Place the heels of your palms at the top of each ear and let the fingertips meet at the top of the head. Move the fingertips forward and hold for five seconds, then move the fingertips backwards and hold for five seconds. This is a small movement. Repeat this forward and backward stretch nine more times.

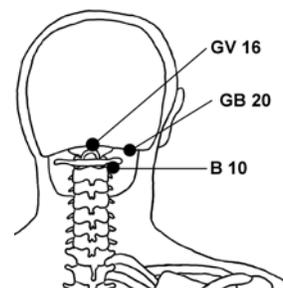


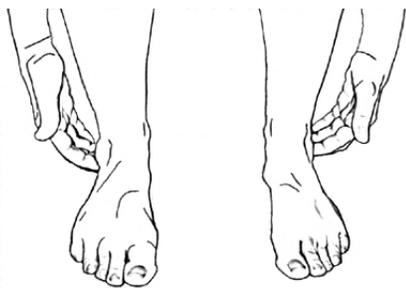
Step 6

(10) Acupressure Points for Headaches and Migraines



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





Step 1

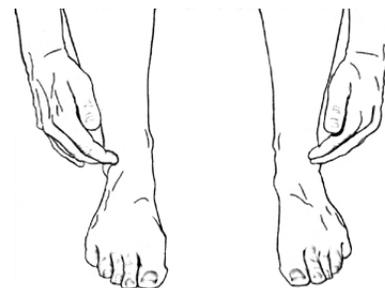
For acute headache start with steps 1, 2, and 3.

1. Hold B 62, located just below the outer ankle. Hold both feet for at least five minutes or until you feel some lessening of the pain.

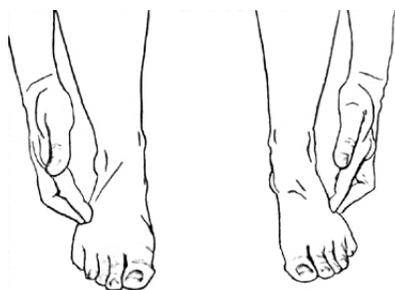
2. Hold GB 40, located in a depression just in front of and slightly below the outer ankle. Hold both feet as in step 1.

3. Hold GB 41 on the top of the foot. Find the groove between the fourth and fifth toes. Move from the toes towards the ankle until you encounter resistance, then move your finger over the tendon, to the little toe side. Hold on both feet until pain subsides. An excellent point for migraines.

4. Hold the LI 4 point on your right hand, located in the webbing between the thumb and index finger. Move your finger up the webbing to where the bones meet, then press towards the index finger bone. Hold for one minute, then hold the same point on the left hand.



Step 2



Step 3



Step 4

5. If it's comfortable to touch your head, place your thumbs in the hollows at the base of the outer skull (GB 20). Hold for two minutes.

6. Place the fingertips of one hand at the center of the base of the skull (GV 16). With the other hand, hold the B 2 points at the inner end of the eyebrows with your index and middle fingers. You may feel a slight indentation at the B 2 points. Hold for two minutes.

7. Continue to hold GV 16 with one hand, and place the fingertips of your other hand between the eyebrows (GV 24.5). Hold for two minutes.

8. With your fingertips, hold ST 3 on both cheeks. This point is located under the cheekbone, directly below the pupil. Press up under the bone, but think of sending energy down to the feet.



Step 5



Step 6



Step 7



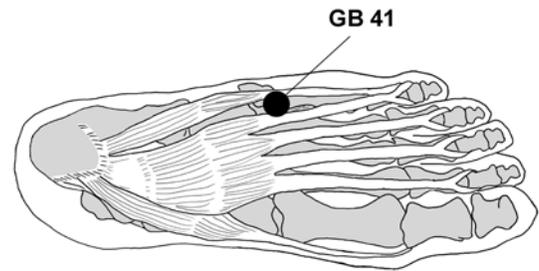
Step 8

(11) Additional Acupressure Points for Headaches

For headaches, especially migraines: Gallbladder 41 (GB 41)

Location: On the top of the foot, move from the toes towards the ankle in the groove between the bones of the fourth and fifth toes. Where the groove ends, jump over the tendon towards the little toe side of the foot.

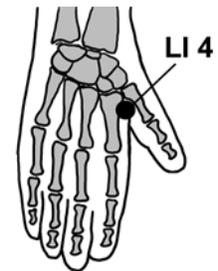
Other uses: Sciatica, shoulder tension, ankle problems, weak low back.



For headache, constipation, toothache: Large Intestine 4 (LI 4)

Location: On the back of the hand, in the webbing between the thumb and index finger. Hold towards the index finger.

Other uses: Upper body pain, arthritis, nosebleed, red/swollen/painful eyes, swelling of the face, sore throat.



For sinus headache, eye pain, headache behind the eye: Bladder 2 (B 2)

Location: Inner end of eyebrow.

Other uses: Neck tension and pain, sinus congestion, floaters (spots before the eyes), blurry vision, red eyes, acute lower back injuries.



Everyday Practices to Address Underlying Conditions

Remember to:

- 1) Start your day with the three basic energy flows
- 2) Warm up before practicing acupressure by brushing energy through the body
- 3) Hold the fingers throughout the day
- 4) End your day by using the daily "janitors"

The best way to benefit from acupressure is to pick one or two practices you enjoy and use them every day for one to two weeks. Gradually select additional practices you'd like to add. Identify a time of time when you'll remember to practice acupressure -- when you first get up, just before you go to sleep, while you're watching TV, even while you're reading a newspaper. The benefits of acupressure come with regular, consistent practice.