

What Works

Anyone of any age can use acupressure to increase vitality and wellness.

Drug-Free Stress Relief at Your Fingertips

By Deborah Myers

Life today is demanding—work, family, relationships, commitments and responsibilities take up most of your time. Chances are your to-do list is so long that sometimes even going on a date with your partner can feel like an obligation. Have you ever felt like you can't add one more task to your plate? Whether you're self-employed or work for someone else, stress is a reality that affects everyone.

The stress of being pulled in so many directions creates a sense of overwhelm that can keep you from completing everyday tasks and taking steps to accomplish long-term goals. When you're under stress, it's hard to think straight. You lose the ability to focus, and creativity goes out the window. It's hard to feel inspired at work, and you can't get much accomplished.

What's more, the physical symptoms can be debilitating. Neck and shoulders tighten up, breathing gets shallow, and headaches build. You feel fatigued, yet it's hard to get to sleep and stay asleep through the night. If these physical symptoms are not corrected quickly, you could be headed down a long road of medical issues.

How do you relieve the symptoms of stress? You need a cure, and one that works quickly. Wouldn't it be nice to find an antidote to stress that doesn't come in a bottle and requires no prescription?

Fortunately, you already have access to an instant remedy 24/7. The relief is in your fingertips—through a practice of self-help acupressure. Like acupuncture, acupressure has been around for thousands of years. Acupressure, however, requires no needles. You simply apply a light, gentle touch to access the energy balance points that are located on the energy meridians that run throughout your body.

Our bodies are made up of energy. When the energy flows smoothly, we feel vital, healthy and capable. Problems arise when the energy gets blocked. That's what happens when we're under stress. We develop "beaver dams," which block the rivers of energy.

How do we release those beaver dams or, better yet, not even let them build up in the first place? All you need to do is gently touch certain energy balance points in combination. This reminds the energy in your body to flow through the rivers, creating a new pattern that allows the free flow of your vital energy. When you practice balancing your energy daily, you support your body to handle whatever might come at you, like trauma, injury, illness, fatigue—and stress.

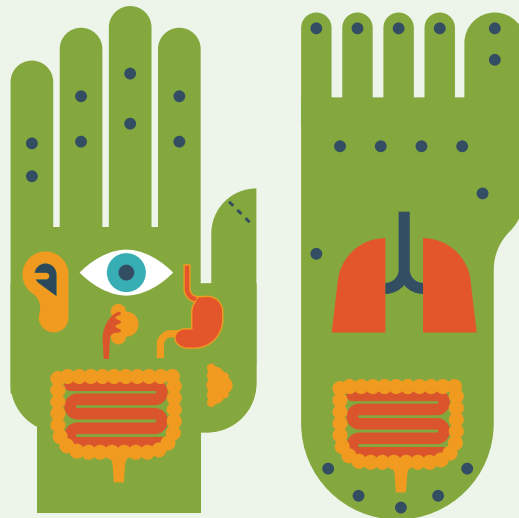
Acupressure gives you a tool you can pull out of your toolbox at any moment of the day and night. It's easy to learn, simple to do, and the benefits are noticeable immediately. Anyone of any age can use acupressure to increase vitality and wellness. We can open up our breathing, let go of aches and pains, gain clarity and focus, balance emotions and become stronger. We *can* let go of stress!

Stress compromises our ability to breathe fully and deeply, which is essential to the body's smooth-flowing energy system. If your breath feels constricted, try this simple acupressure pose. Fold your arms across your chest and give yourself a big hug. While lightly placing your fingertips on the opposite arms, inhale deeply and exhale fully. Breathe in restorative oxygen, and breathe out toxic carbon dioxide. Touching the energy balance points that are between the shoulder and the elbow allows the body to calm down, relieve anxiety, let go of fear and release old patterns that get in our way. Because the pose naturally drops the shoulders and opens up the back and neck, it feels good physically, too.

If you're feeling muddled and need help focusing, place your fingers on the left and right base of the skull. Lightly touching the energy points here helps balance your energy flow and lets you think more clearly. It can help with studying, analyzing, taking tests, and sorting out information while you're sitting in front of the computer. It helps you to be more productive at work, and have more fun at play!

Those same energy points can be used to bring rest and good sleep. When you want to go to sleep, hold the base of your skull with a light, gentle touch, and your body will recognize that it is time to let go and clear your mind of clutter and chatter.

When we become partners with our own bodies, we're able to bring relief and let go of the symptoms of stress. Easy-to-use, self-help acupressure is the antidote to stress and good "medicine" for living well.



Deborah Myers is a certified acupressurist and Jin Shin Jyutsu practitioner. She offers private sessions, group classes, and workplace wellness workshops to improve health and relieve stress. She has also created a self-help animated video program for kids to use at home and in schools. You can contact her at (707) 546-5692 or Deborah@healthatyourfingertips.com. Check out her programs at www.healthatyourfingertips.com.

