

Acupressure for Anxiety

Self-care to ease stress

This handout explains how to use acupressure to improve sleep and reduce anxiety, depression, and stress.

What is acupressure?

Acupressure is a system anyone can use to find relief from anxiety, depression, poor sleep, and other issues caused by stress. You can learn to give yourself an acupressure treatment.

Acupressure is rooted in Traditional Chinese Medicine. It uses points along *acupuncture channels* in your body. These channels are connected to the nervous system. When you massage these points, it helps your body relax. This can help ease stress, improve your mood, and help you sleep.

Doing acupressure on ourselves lets us form a better relationship with our bodies. Acupressure is also a great way to practice mindfulness.

Breathing to Lessen Anxiety

One way to reduce stress is to pay attention to your breathing. You can use this practice to help relax you and reduce anxiety:

1. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly.
2. Slowly inhale through your nose for 4 seconds. As you do so, you should feel the hand on your belly rise. The hand on your chest should not move.
3. Hold your breath for 2 seconds, then slowly exhale through your mouth for 5 seconds.
4. Repeat several times, until you feel more calm and relaxed.



Use these practices whenever you are feeling stressed and need to relax.

Acupressure Techniques

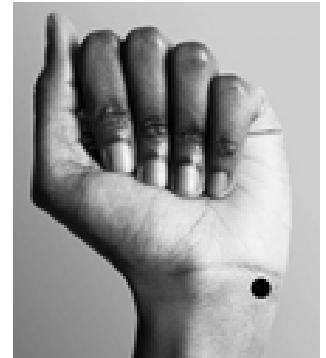
Hall of Impressions (Yin Tang)

This point is just above the nose, between the eyebrows. Massage this point in a circle for 3 cycles of breathing.



Spirit Gate (HT 7)

This point is on the inside of your wrist, on the pinky side of the hand. Massage this point in a circle on one side for 3 cycles of breathing. Then repeat on the other side for 3 cycles of breathing.



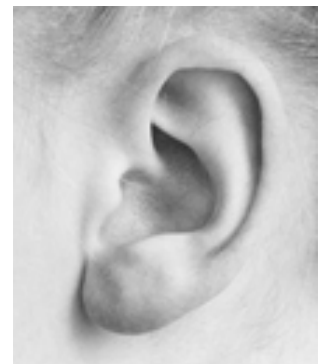
Inner Gate (PC 6)

This point is in the middle of your forearm, 2 to 3 inches from the wrist. Massage this point in a circle on one side for 3 cycles of breathing. Repeat on the other side for 3 cycles of breathing.



Ear lobes

Massage both earlobes at the same time if you can. Or, massage first one and then the other for 3 breathing cycles each.



Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Community Care Line:
206.744.2500

This handout was adapted from "Acupressure for Anxiety" by Bastyr University Acupuncture and East Asian Medicine and Harborview Pain Relief Service.