

Self-Help Guide

Acupressure to Aid Relaxation

Acupressure is an alternative therapy which originates from traditional Chinese medicine. Through stimulating specific pressure points on the body, it may help to promote relaxation and ease anxiety (Cheung, 2015). Here are some simple acupressure techniques you can try at home;

1. Hall of Impression Point

This point is found between the eyebrows. Applying pressure to this point is said to help with anxiety and stress.

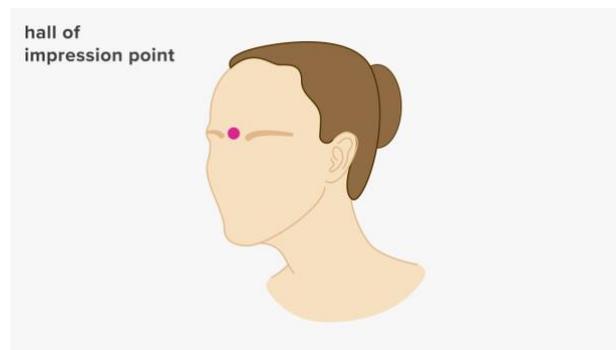


Fig1: Healthline, 2018. Hall of Impression Point

To stimulate this point, sit comfortably in chair and close your eyes. With your thumb or index finger, locate the point between your eyebrows. Inhale slowly and apply a firm but gentle pressure. As you do so, move your thumb/finger in small circles on the point for a 2-3 minutes.

2. Heavenly Gate Point

This point is located in the upper part of the ear. Stimulating this point is said to help relieve anxiety, stress, and insomnia.

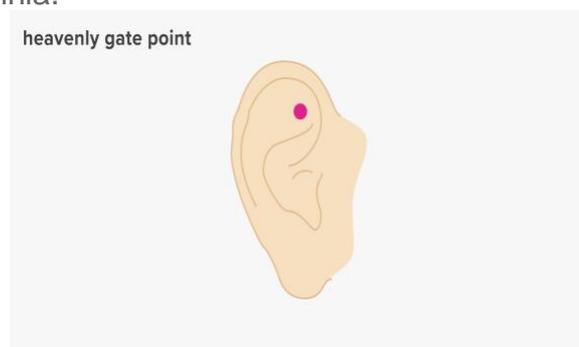


Fig2: Healthline, 2018. Heavenly Gate Point

With your index finger, apply a gentle, firm pressure as before for 2-3 minutes.

3. Shoulder Well Point



This point can be found in middle of your shoulder muscle (between the bottom of your neck and your shoulder). This pressure point is said to help with relieving stress, muscle tension, and headaches.

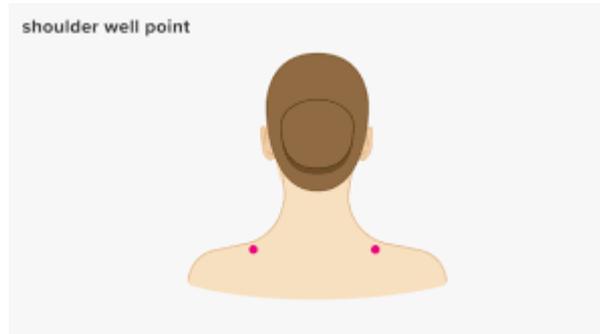


Fig 3 Healthline, 2018. Shoulder Well Point

Locate the point in the middle of your shoulder muscle. Pinch the point between your thumb and middle finger. With a firm, gentle pressure, massage the point for up to 5 seconds. Repeat if necessary.

Some evidence suggests that stimulating this point may induce labour and should therefore be avoided by pregnant women.

4. Union Valley Point

The Union Valley Point can be found at the soft fleshy part of skin between your thumb and index finger. Stimulating this point is said to reduce stress, headaches, and neck pain.



Fig 4 Healthline, 2018. Union Valley Point

Holding the area between the thumb and index finger with your opposite hand, apply a firm gentle pressure to the point.

Taking slow deep breaths, massage the area for a few moments.

This is another acupressure point which is thought to possibly induce labour and should therefore be avoided by pregnant women.

5. Great Surge Point



This point is located on the foot, approximately two finger widths below the section between the big toe and second toe, just above the bone. This point is also believed to help with insomnia and pain.



Fig 5, Healthline, 2018. Great Surge Point

Slide your index finger straight down between the first two toes. Once you have located the point, apply a firm, deep pressure and massage for around 5 seconds.

6. Inner Frontier Gate Point

Stimulating this point is also thought to help with feelings of nausea. The inner frontier gate point can be found on your arm. Stimulating this point may help to reduce anxiety while also relieving nausea and pain.

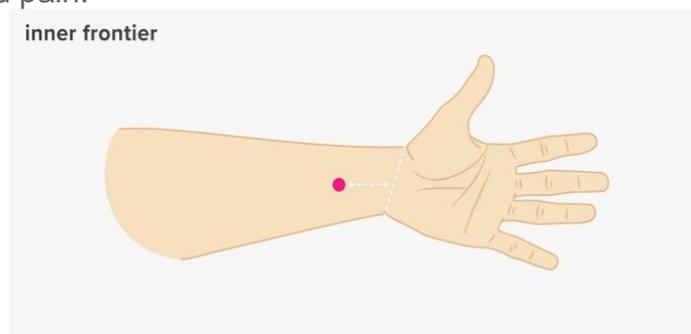


Fig 6, Healthline, 2018. Inner Frontier Gate Point

Resting your arm on a table or your lap, turn your hand so your palm is facing upwards. With your other hand, measure 3 finger widths down from your wrist (towards your elbow). The point can be found in the middle of your forearm. Apply a gentle, firm pressure to the point and massage for a few seconds.

References / Figures (1-6)

Cheung, Wm. (2015). *Effects of acupuncture on anxiety: a systematic review and meta-analysis*. Available: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26002571>. Last accessed 23rd March 2020.

Raypole, C. (2018). *6 Pressure Points for Anxiety Relief*. Available: <https://www.healthline.com/health/pressure-points-for-anxiety>. Last accessed 23 March 2020.

