Using Acupressure Pressure Points to Help Ease Migraine Pain

by JAIME SANDERS

Using Acupressure Pressure Points for Migraines

Six years ago, I was amid the worst case of a chronic migraine, chronic daily headache, and new daily persistent headache.

My neurologist suggested that I take some pain management classes to learn how to use mindfulness, breathing, and acupressure to manage my chronic pain. I had never used any of those natural techniques before, but I was eager to learn how to incorporate them into my daily routine.

What Is Acupressure?

Studied and developed by Chinese doctors, acupressure is an ancient healing art. These doctors saw that muscular tension concentrated around specific points in the body. When tension accumulates, it blocks the free circulation of energy through the body. This blockage or traffic jam lead to physical problems and stress disorders.

The use of acupressure releases muscle tension, eliminating toxins in the tissue thus freeing energy and blood flow. Oxygen and other nutrients can nourish more areas of the body as blood circulation increases.

Acupressure points are gateways for electrical energy or chi. This chi (the life source) moves through the body along pathways known as meridians. The key to health is having an unobstructed flow of energy through the meridians.

Acupuncture vs. Acupressure

Acupressure is a technique much like acupuncture. Instead of the use of needles, acupressure uses the fingers to press key points to stimulate the body's natural, self-curative abilities.

"Acu" means "healing point," so when you apply pressure to these "healing points," you are stimulating the body's natural ability to heal. Muscular tension is released, the circulation of blood and the body's life forces to aid healing are promoted.

Acupressure and acupuncture use the same points, except while acupuncture uses needles, acupressure uses the gentle but firm pressure of fingers, the hand, and even the foot. Acupressure is safe to do on yourself and others, even if you have never done it before.

Creating a wellness routine which includes acupressure, breathing, stretching and meditation will help you develop potent and powerful skills to balance your body from the inside out.

Common Ailments and Symptoms Treated With Acupressure:

- Migraine/headaches
- Back pain
- Neck and shoulder tension and/or pain
- Chronic fatigue
- Breathing difficulties
- Sinus problems
- Insomnia
- Digestive issues (i.e., diarrhea, nausea, ulcer pain, indigestion, abdominal cramps)
- Menstrual cramps

Benefits

- Can be done nearly anywhere and anytime
- Immediately available
- Produces fast and safe results
- Can reduce the need for costly medical visits, dependence on medications and risk of side effects

Before beginning acupressure, there are few things to be careful about:

- Do not press on infected skin, open wounds or over tumors;
- Specific points must be avoided if pregnant as they can induce uterine contractions.

How Does Acupressure Work?

Think of acupressure as a healing touch that reduces tension, increases circulation, and enables the body to relax. Relieving stress through acupressure strengthens resistance to disease and promotes wellness. With acupressure, symptoms are considered an expression of the condition of the body.

When using acupressure for the treatment and management of a migraine and headache, the focus is on relieving pain and discomfort as well as on responding to tension before it develops into a “dis-ease” or before the constrictions and imbalances can do further damage.

Through a mild, painless stimulation, acupressure inhibits the pain signals sent to the brain. This has been described as closing the “gates” of the pain-signaling system, preventing painful sensations from passing through the spinal cord to the brain.

Tension accumulates around pressure points. If you have a chronically tense muscle or are in a spasm, the secretion of lactic acid causes the muscle fibers to contract. This secretion can be caused by stress, fatigue, trauma, chemical imbalances and/or poor circulation.

When a point is pressed, the muscle tension yields to the finger pressure, elongating and relaxing the fibers, allowing blood to flow freely, and for toxins to be released and eliminated.

Increased circulation allows for more oxygen and other nutrients to enter affected areas, increasing the body’s resistance to illness and promotes a longer, healthier, and more vital life.

Next page: How to use pressure points for migraines.

How to Find and Hold a Point

With acupressure, you literally feel where you hurt. How do you know when you found a point?

It will be tender, even somewhat painful to touch, if there is significant energy blockage at that point. However,

when the appropriate amount of pressure is applied to the right spot, you will feel that “good hurt” recognizable from stretching or a good massage.

Two or three minutes of pressure on the spot along with deep breathing will begin to diminish the tenderness. You may even experience immediate relief from the primary symptom that you are treating.

Examples of Acupressure Points for a Migraine and Headaches

L14 “Hoku” or “Joining the Valley”

The Hoku point is located bilaterally, on the back of the hand in the webbing between the thumb and index finger.

1. Squeeze L14 by putting your thumb on the point, and your index finger on the palm side of your hand.
2. Hold it for a few minutes, pressing firmly, or until you feel relief. Repeat on the opposite hand.

This point should not be used during pregnancy.

GB20 “Gates of Consciousness”

The GB20 point is located at the back of the head and neck.

1. With your thumbs, locate the points underneath the base of the skull into the hollow areas on either side, two to three inches apart.
2. Close your eyes, then slowly tilt head back into your fingers/thumbs.
3. Firmly press up underneath the skull.
4. Continue long, deep breaths, holding the pressure point for two minutes, while deep breathing, then gradually release the pressure.

GV24.5 “Third Eye Point”

The GV24.5 point is in the middle forehead area where the brows meet.

1. Feel along the nasal bridge and palpate for indentions.
2. Apply slow, gentle bilateral pressure.

B2 Drilling Bamboo

The B2 point is located where the bridge of your nose meets your eye socket and below the eyebrows.

1. Move thumbs to the forehead area, find the hollows in the area on either side of the nose where the brows meet the bridge of the nose.
2. Apply very gently pressure.
3. Continue deep breaths – in through the nose, and out through the mouth – hold pressure for one to two minutes.

ST3 “Facial Beauty”

The ST3 point is located at the bottom of the cheekbones in alignment with the pupils.

1. Move index and middle fingers along the side of the nostrils.
2. Feel for cheekbones and continue bilateral pressure gently with index fingers.
3. Deep breath.
4. Tilt your face into or toward your fingers (your fingers should be aligned with the pupils of your eyes.)
5. Hold gentle, steady pressure and deep breathe for one minute.

GB41 “Above Tears”

The GB41 point is located on the top of the foot, approximately one inch above the web space between the fourth and fifth toes (the groove between the toes).

1. Close your eyes and take a deep cleansing breath.
2. Place the heel of one foot between the first and second toe of the other foot.
3. Briskly rub for one minute while taking deep breaths.
4. Move the same heel to the web space between the fourth and fifth toe.
5. Repeat deep breaths.
6. Change foot and repeat.
7. End with two deep breaths and gently massaging temples bilaterally.

LV3 “Bigger Rushing”

The LV3 point is located at the top of the foot between the first and second metatarsals.

1. Start at the webbing between the toes and slide your heel or finger/thumb toward you.