

ASCH

2026

**ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC
MEETINGS & WORKSHOPS**

New Frontiers in Hypnosis:
Human Ingenuity, AI Innovation,
and Ethical Boundaries

 VIRTUAL

March 20–22, 2026

Integrating Acupressure & Traditional Chinese Medicine Meridians with Clinical Hypnosis: A Practical Workshop

Michael Spertus, MD
Prachi Garodia, MD

March 22, 2026

Presenter's Name



Michael Spertus, MD

- Board-Certified in Family Medicine, Integrative Medicine, and Lifestyle Medicine
- ASCH certified in clinical hypnosis
- Private practice in Integrative Medicine, Mind-Body Medicine, and professional coaching (SpertusMD, PLLC)
- Medical Acupuncturist, assist with UNE course for Physicians (AcuMed). Trained in Battlefield and NADA/Acudetox Auricular protocols.
- Voluntary Asst Prof. at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine



Prachi Garodia, MD

- Board-Certified in Internal Medicine, Integrative Medicine, Obesity, Functional and Lifestyle Medicine
- ASCH certified in clinical hypnosis
- Medical Director for Integrative clinical practice (The Healing MD)
- Trained in Medical, Electro and cosmetic Acupuncture from India. Battlefield Instructor. NADA/Acudetox trained.
- Voluntary Asst Prof. at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

Disclosures

ASCH and ASCH-ERF jointly provided this program.

No staff or committee members involved in the development, planning or execution of educational content have any financial relationships or conflicts of interest to disclose.

Dr. Spertus has no significant financial relationships or conflicts of interest to disclose.

Dr. Garodia has no significant financial relationships or conflicts of interest to disclose.

Continuing Education & Accreditation Statement

This program has been approved by the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis Standards of Training Committee to be used toward Membership and Certification requirements.

The American Society of Clinical Hypnosis-Education and Research Foundation (ASCH-ERF) is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians. The American Society of Clinical Hypnosis-Education and Research Foundation (ASCH-ERF) designates this live activity for a *maximum of 57 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)*[™]. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

This program is Approved by the National Association of Social Workers (886386995-7390) for 57 continuing education contact hours.

This course is approved by the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis and as such is an approved continuing education course per Florida's AC-Rule 64B-4-6002 American Society of Clinical Hypnosis-ERF is designated as an Approved PACE Program Provider.



The American Society of Clinical Hypnosis Education & Research Foundation Nationally Approved PACE Program Provider for FAGD/MAGD credit. Approval does not imply acceptance by any regulatory authority or AGD endorsement. 10/1/2024 to 9/30/2027. Provider ID#217022



American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists and the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH). American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) is approved by the American Psychological Association (APA) to sponsor continuing education for psychologists.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

- **Describe evidence and proposed mechanisms for acupressure and meridian-based interventions and how they complement hypnotic processes**
- **Demonstrate two brief self-administered acupressure sequences for stress relief and headache reduction and lead a hypnotic meridian meditation for mental focus.**
- **Implement clinic-ready materials to integrate acupressure and meridian-focused hypnotic meditations into routine practice**

TCM, Acupuncture, and Acupressure

What is Traditional Chinese Medicine?

3,000 year old system comprised of 5 pillars



Acupuncture

Herbology
internal medicine

Heat Therapy &
Tui Na:
*moxa, cupping,
orthopedic massage*

Movement:
Qi gong
Tai Qi
internal martial arts
breath work
meditation

Food as
Medicine:
Lifestyle
modification
5 flavors: sweet,
salty, sour, bitter,
and spicy

What is Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

- Longest “clinical trial in history”
- Empirical evidence recorded over thousands of years
- 1st documented book: *Huang Di Nei Jing* (475-221 BC)

- **Macro perspective: Whole person/Systems Biology**
- Mind is NOT separate from body
- **Create BALANCE in Body/Mind/Spirit by regulating system**
- **Customized medicine:**
treat root cause based on patterns *not just symptoms
- **Prevention is key:**
- *Don't sharpen your weapons when enemy is at the gate!*



Hua Tuo, China's first surgeon & the general, Han Dynasty, aprox. 208 BC

Training



China
PhD, 6 years

TCM System:
herbology
acupuncture
Medicinal food
Tui na, cupping
moxa

USA
L.Ac., Dipl.OM,
DAOM. DACM
4-6 yrs training

TCM System:
herbology
acupuncture
Medicinal food
Tui na, cupping
moxa

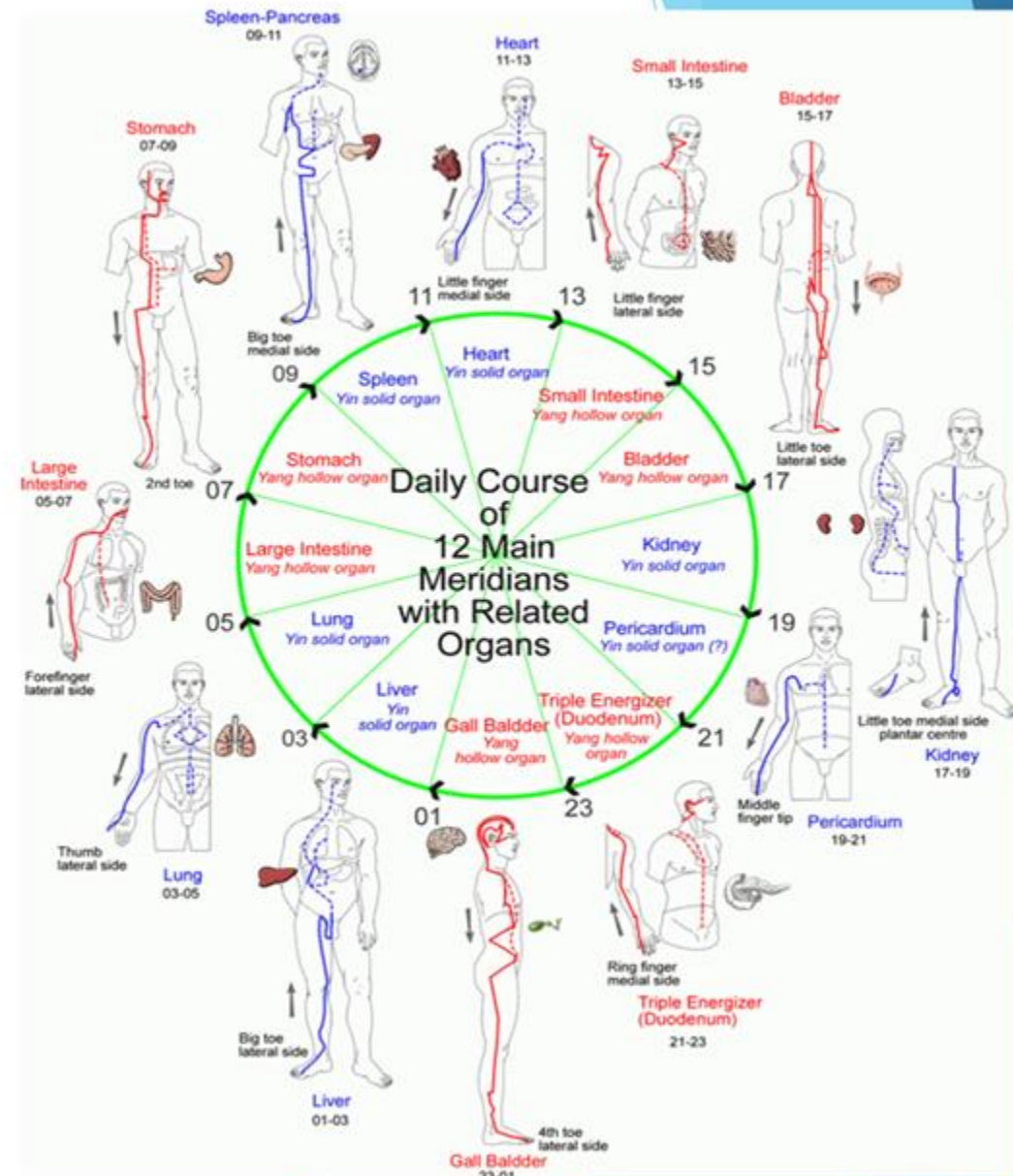
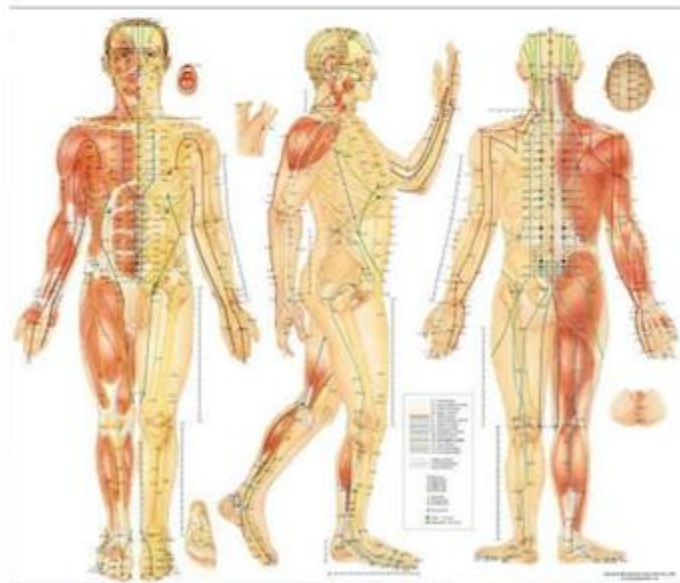
**Medical
Acupuncture**
generally for physicians
(MD, DO) after or
during their medical
training, at least 300
additional hours, AAMA
approved programs
and certification
available

Dry Needling
46-74 hrs
focus on TP,
myofascial pain, PT

**Battlefield
Acupuncture
(BFA)**
1-2 half days- 12 hrs
Ear protocols
focus on pain, stress
corpsmen, medical
professionals
COL. NIEMTZOW*

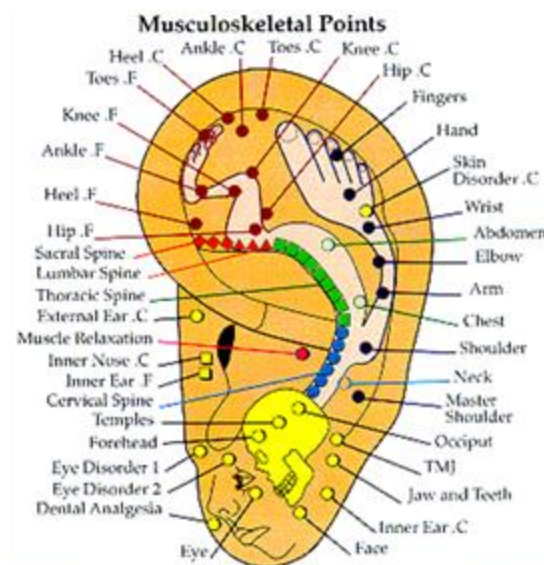
The Body according to TCM

- Human body has 361 acupuncture points along 12 meridians/highways
- Qi (life force) flows through them in 24 hr cycles
- The meridians like a web or network comparisons made to: interstitial connective tissue, neurovascular bundles, Primo-Vascular System (Boham)

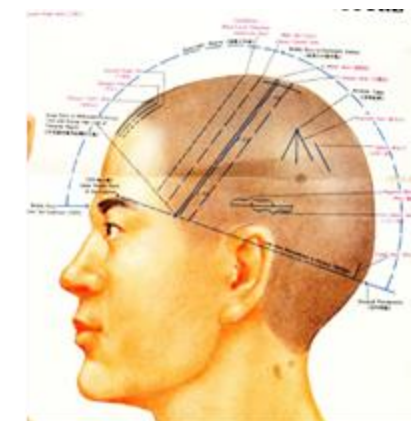


Microsystems in Acupuncture/Acupressure

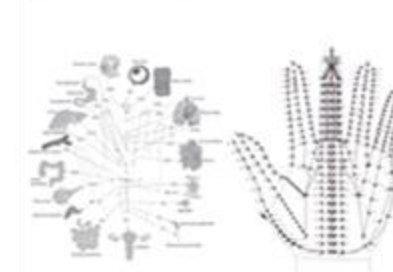
- Several **microsystems** exist within the practice of acupuncture.
- Microsystems are more easily accessed than traditional body points.
- They are like miniature maps on the:
 - Scalp
 - Hands
 - Feet
 - Ears: Multiple maps based on different systems and lineages (Traditional Chinese, French, etc.)



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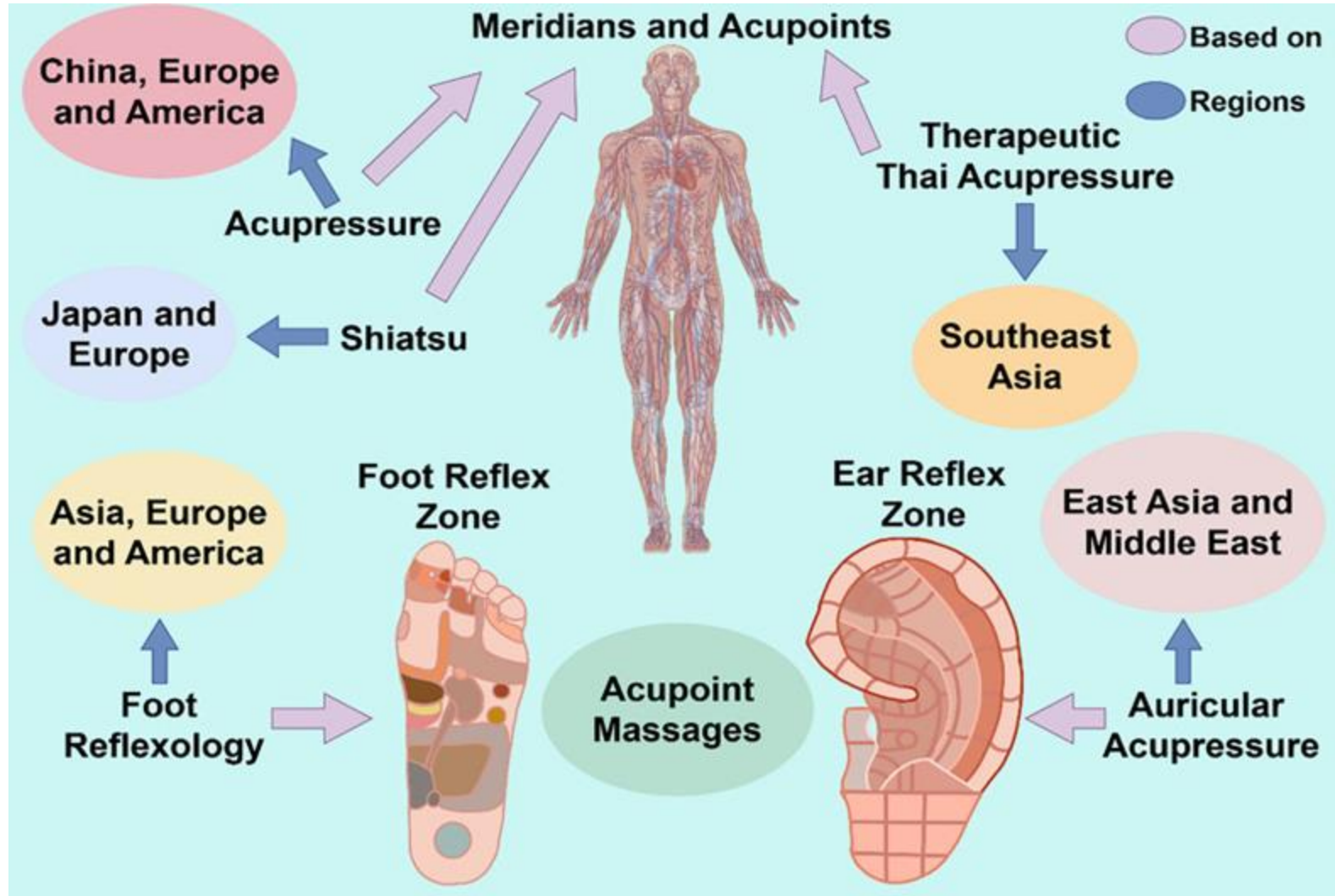


What is AcuPRESSURE?

- Uses fingers, hands, or other instruments to stimulate acupoints **WITHOUT** piercing skin
- Non-invasive, safe, can be done on your own
- Predates acupuncture - has been used for >5000 years!
 - Most well-known system originated in China, however other point-based therapies developed across the globe (e.g. Marma-India, Anma/Shiatsu-Japan, Reflexology-Egypt,; Romiromi-Maori; Lomi Lomi-Polynesia; Nuat Phaen Massage-Thailand; Pressure Point Massage-various in the Americas)



Acupoint massage



Acupressure Precautions

- Never perform acupressure over open wounds, varicose veins, bruised or swollen areas
- Pre-existing bleeding, heart conditions and diabetics should exercise caution when performing acupressure
- Acupressure should never cause pain (OK to feel discomfort). Immediately stop if you feel pain or lightheaded.
- Certain points during pregnancy traditionally avoided (LI4, SP6, BL60, GB21, and lower abdominal/sacral points)

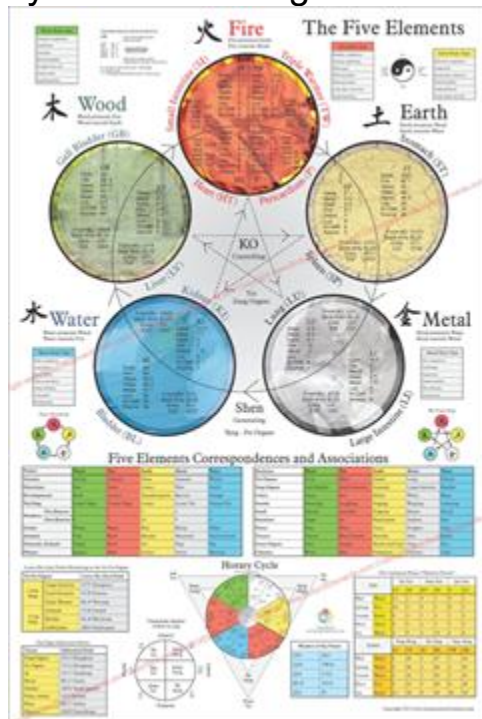
Science and Evidence



Mechanisms and Theory

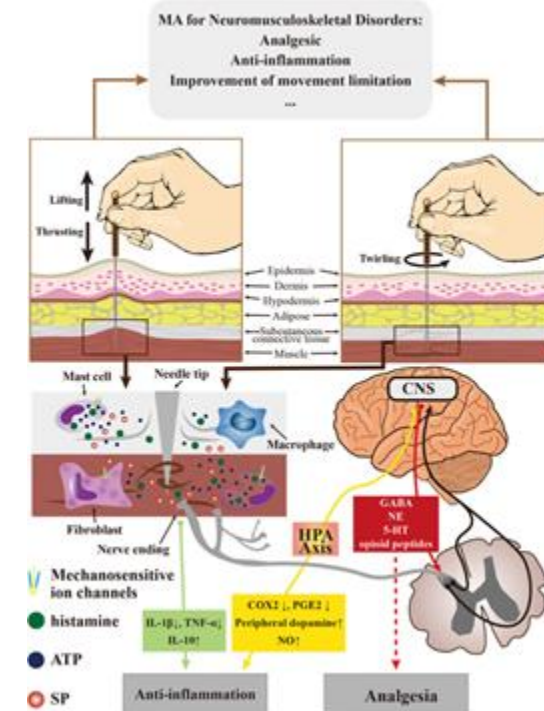
TCM

- Flow of Qi through 14 meridians
- Yin-Yang Balance
- De Qi Sensation
- Energy Unblocking , balancing organs
- Invasion of pathogenic factors
- 5-element theory
- Pulse and Tongue Diagnosis
- Palpatory abdominal diagnosis



Modern Science

- Meridians often correspond to connective tissue planes
- Local level and microenvironment: mechanical deformation/tissue wrapping, mechanosensitive cell (fibroblasts), release of biomolecules
- Spinal cord level: glia, down-reg of inflammation/cytokines
- Gate control theory
- CNS: descending pain-inhibitory pathways, neurotransmitter release (opioids, 5HT, GABA, glutamate, DA, ACh), HPA axis and autonomic
- Molecular: phosphorylation, methylation, histone, cannabinoids, endogenous opioid peptides



Wang BG, Xu LL, Yang HY, Xie J, Xu G, Tang WC. Manual acupuncture for neuromusculoskeletal disorders: The selection of stimulation parameters and corresponding effects. *Front Neurosci*. 2023;17:1096339. Published 2023 Jan 30.

Contributions of Acupuncture to Modern Pain Science

Pain Science Concept

Gate Control Theory

Endogenous Opioids

Frequency Specificity

Trigger Points

Connection to Acupuncture

Needles "close the gate" via A-beta fibers.

Acupuncture effect is blocked by Naloxone.

2Hz vs 100Hz releases specific peptides.

71% overlap with TCM acupoints.

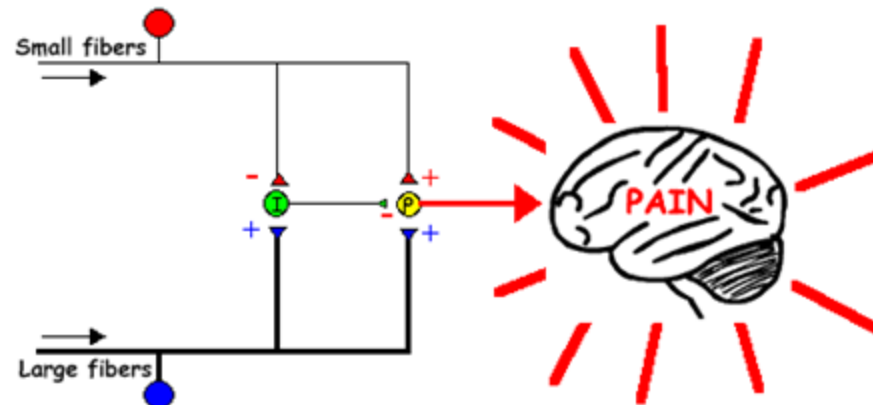
Key Citation

Melzack & Wall (1965/1975)

Mayer et al. (1977)

Han (2003)

Melzack et al. (1977)



Acupuncture Evidence Map (2022)

- Acupuncture is known to be effective for many health conditions.
- An acupuncture evidence map was produced based on a review of the literature and published in 2022.

Many pain diagnoses were identified as responding well to acupuncture:

- Chronic musculoskeletal pain
- Migraine/Headaches
- Fibromyalgia
- Post-operative and cancer-related pain
- ... AND MORE!



Live Whole Health.

2A. All Pain Other than Musculoskeletal Pain

	Benefit for Acupuncture	No Benefit for Acupuncture
At least 1 Conclusion Rated as High or Strong Certainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fibromyalgia- pain, fatigue, sleep quality 	
At least 1 Conclusion Rated as Moderate Certainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome Post-op pain Fibromyalgia Migraine Tension headache 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post herpetic neuralgia Migraine Post-op pain
All Conclusions are Rated as Low or Very Low Certainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-caesarean pain Post-op pain* Painful conditions in emergency department Chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy Migraine headache without aura Pain management in cancer Related side effects in breast cancer associated with hormone therapy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occipital neuralgia Primary trigeminal neuralgia Carpal tunnel syndrome Peripheral neuropathy Kidney stone* Post-op dental pain* Chronic non-cancer pain Diabetic peripheral neuropathy

2B. Musculoskeletal Pain

	Benefit for Acupuncture	No Benefit for Acupuncture
At least 1 Conclusion Rated as High or Strong Certainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoulder pain* 	
At least 1 Conclusion Rated as Moderate Certainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediate pain relief in musculoskeletal pain conditions Chronic musculoskeletal pain Temporomandibular joint dysfunction* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knee pain* Hip pain
All Conclusions are Rated as Low or Very Low Certainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronic low back pain* Chronic neck pain* Chronic low back pain* Frozen shoulder Lateral elbow pain Acute low back pain* Low back pain- herniated disc Post-stroke shoulder-hand syndrome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ankle sprain/pain

Mary Ann Liebert

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Effects of Acupressure on Anxiety: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

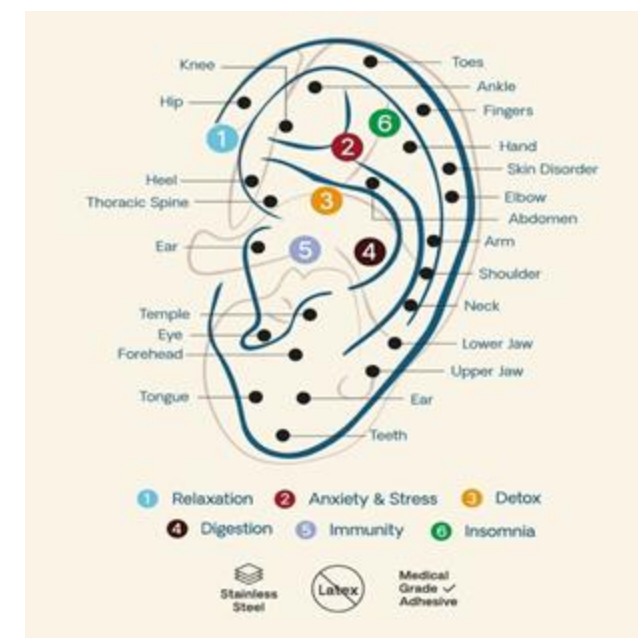
[Su-Ru Chen, RN, PhD](#), [Wen-Hsuan Hou, MD, PhD](#), [...], and [Pi-Chu Lin, RN, EdD](#) [View all authors and affiliations](#)

[Volume 28, Issue 1](#) | <https://doi.org/10.1089/jicm.2020.0256>

Conclusions:

Our meta-analysis suggests that acupressure can alleviate anxiety. Acupressure was more effective for inpatients and preoperative patients when finger massage was applied. In individuals with anxiety and a stable hemodynamic status, acupressure could be a promising treatment option. However, the substantial heterogeneity across studies means that any inference from the results should be performed cautiously.

<https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/jicm.2020.0256>
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1136/acupmed-2014-010720>





Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

Applied Nursing Research

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/apnr



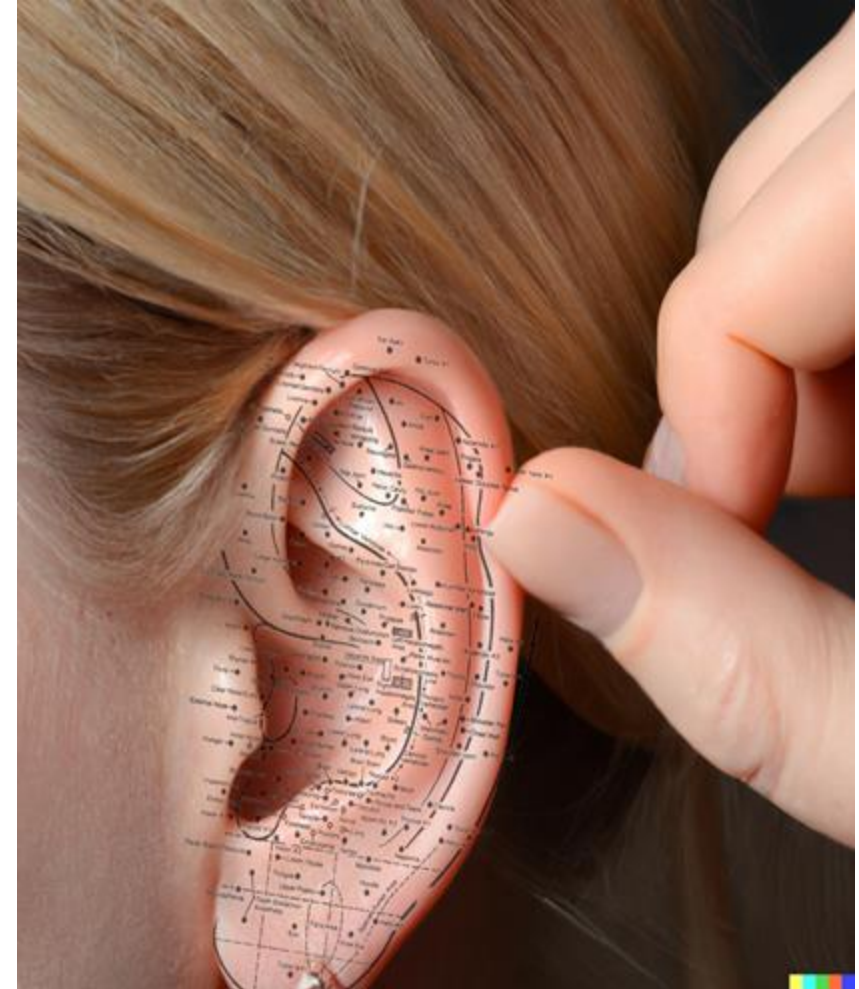
Auricular acupressure reduces anxiety and burnout in behavioral healthcare[☆]

Michelle Olshan-Perlmutter (PMHCNS, FNP)^{a,*}, Kenneth Carter (MD, MPH, Dipl.Ac)^b,
Jonathan Marx (PhD)^c



6. Conclusion

This study is the first to show that auricular acupressure Shenmen acupoint reduces symptoms of anxiety and burnout in behavioral healthcare providers. In addition, 60% of respondents subjectively experienced benefits including less stress, more patience with patients, sleeping better and being more mindful. Our study indicated the auricular acupressure Shenmen acupoint was well tolerated. The authors recommend this therapeutic option be offered to healthcare providers as viable resource to address anxiety and burnout. Additional research is needed to replicate and expand on these findings in other healthcare environments.



Clinical Guidelines | April 4, 2017

Noninvasive Treatments for Acute, Subacute, and Chronic Low Back Pain: A Clinical Practice Guideline From the American College of Physicians FREE

Amir Qaseem, MD, PhD, MHA [✉](#), Timothy J. Wilt, MD, MPH, Robert M. McLean, MD, ... [View all authors +](#)

Recommendation 2:

For patients with chronic low back pain, clinicians and patients should initially select nonpharmacologic treatment with exercise, multidisciplinary rehabilitation, acupuncture, mindfulness-based stress reduction (moderate-quality evidence), tai chi, yoga, motor control exercise, progressive relaxation, electromyography biofeedback, low-level laser therapy, operant therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, or spinal manipulation (low-quality evidence). (Grade: strong recommendation)



[Intervention Review]

Acupuncture for the prevention of episodic migraine

Klaus Linde¹, Gianni Allais², Benno Brinkhaus³, Yutong Fei⁴, Michael Mehring¹, Emily A. Vertosick⁵, Andrew Vickers⁵, Adrian R White⁶

Authors' conclusions

The available evidence suggests that adding acupuncture to symptomatic treatment of attacks reduces the frequency of headaches. Contrary to the previous findings, the updated evidence also suggests that there is an effect over sham, but this effect is small. The available trials also suggest that acupuncture may be at least similarly effective as treatment with prophylactic drugs. Acupuncture can be considered a treatment option for patients willing to undergo this treatment. As for other migraine treatments, long-term studies, more than one year in duration, are lacking.

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

Acupuncture for preventing migraine attacks

Bottom line

The available evidence suggests that a course of acupuncture consisting of at least six treatment sessions can be a valuable option for people with migraine.



Acupressure Evidence

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405844024147068>

Research trends of acupressure from 2004 to 2024: A bibliometric and visualization analysis

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35085025/>

Effects of Acupressure on Anxiety: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23415783/>

The effectiveness of acupressure on relieving pain: a systematic review

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38125337/>

Randomized Controlled Trial of Acupressure for Perception of Stress and Health-Related Quality of Life Among Health Care Providers During the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Self-Acupressure for Stress (SAS) Trial

Role of Hypnosis

Original Article

Potential Synergism between Hypnosis and Acupuncture—Is the Whole More Than the Sum of Its Parts?

Elad Schiff^{1,2}, Steven Gurgevich² and Opher Caspi³

From abstract: Both hypnosis and acupuncture have gained credibility over the years in their effectiveness for treating various health conditions. Currently, each of these treatments is administered in **distinct settings** and **separate times**. That is, even if patients receive both treatments as part of a multidimensional therapeutic program, they would typically receive them separately rather than simultaneously at the same session. **This separation however might be undesirable since, at least theoretically, hypnosis and acupuncture could potentially augment each other if administered concomitantly.**

Augmentation and Synergy

- Acupuncture or acupressure to initiate or deepen hypnotic induction or deepen trance
 - Role of ritual and ceremony
- Acupoints as a somatic anchor in trance
- Hypnotic suggestions to augment the effects of or receptivity to acupuncture/pressure
 - expectation, relaxation response, analgesia, ratification/DeQi
- Hypnotic imagery to stimulate specific points and flow through meridians
- Hypnosis suggestions to prolong the treatment window of acupuncture
- Overlapping and complementary mechanisms

Acupressure Points, Demos, & PRACTICE

Acupressure Technique

Sit or lie down comfortably

Using a thumb, finger or knuckle apply gentle but firm pressure to the acupoint

Slowly increase pressure until desired firmness is achieved, sustain pressure for 30 seconds to 2 minutes, and then slowly decrease pressure

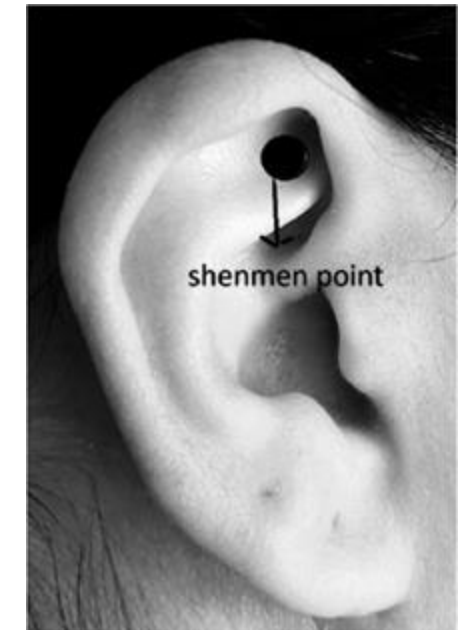
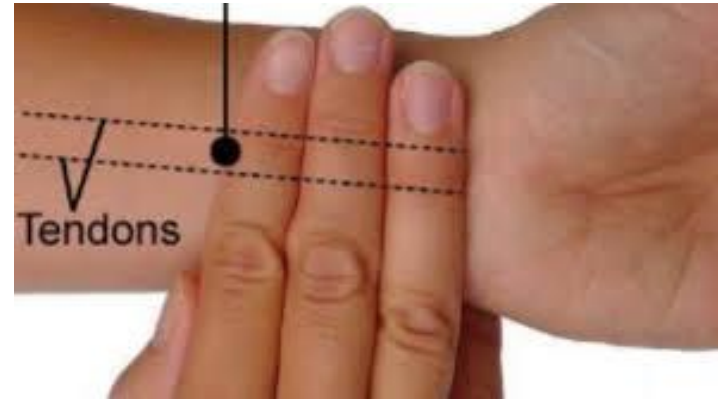


Acupressure for well-being

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3smiy9PJGo>

Acupressure Points for Stress and Anxiety

- Pericardium 6 (PC6: Neiguan, “Inner Gate”)
- Auricular Shenmen (“Spirit Gate,” “Door of the Spirit”)
- Yintang (Ex-HN-3: “Hall of Impression”)





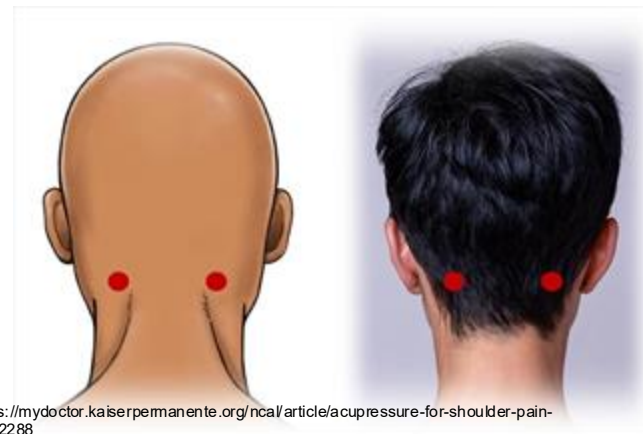
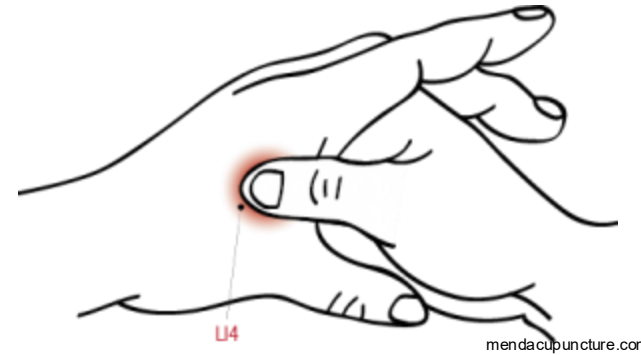
Breakout 1!

1. Decide who will go first (30s)
2. Participant A facilitates (5 min total): Intro/Pre-Facilitation (30s)
3. Brief Facilitation/Induction of your choice (1 min)
4. Acupressure point 1 with hypnotic suggestions (1 min)
5. Acupressure point 2 with hypnotic suggestions (1 min)
6. Acupressure point 3 with hypnotic suggestions (1 min)
7. Re-orienting (30s)
8. SWITCH: Participant B facilitates (5 min total; steps 2-6)
9. Debrief (90s)

Total: 12 min

Acupressure Points for Headache

- Large Intestine 4 (LI4: Hegu)
- Bladder 2 (BL2: Zanzhu: “Gathered Bamboo”)
- Taiyang (Ex-HN-9: “Sun,” “Supreme Yang”)
- Gallbladder 20 (GB20: Fengchi “Wind Pool”)





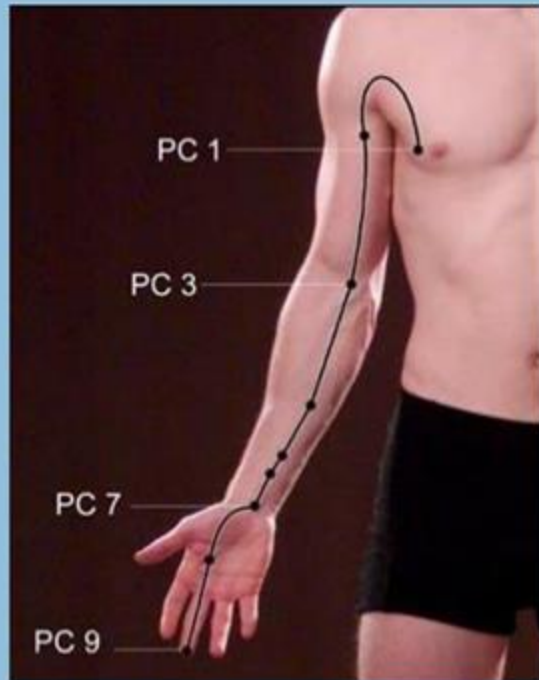
Breakout 2!

1. Decide who will go first (30s)
2. Participant A facilitates (5 min total): Intro/Pre-Facilitation (30s)
3. Brief Facilitation/Induction of your choice (1 min)
4. Acupressure point 1 with hypnotic suggestions (1 min)
5. Acupressure point 2 with hypnotic suggestions (1 min)
6. Acupressure point 3 with hypnotic suggestions (1 min)
7. Re-orienting (30s)
8. SWITCH: Participant B facilitates (5 min total; steps 2-6)
9. Debrief (90s)

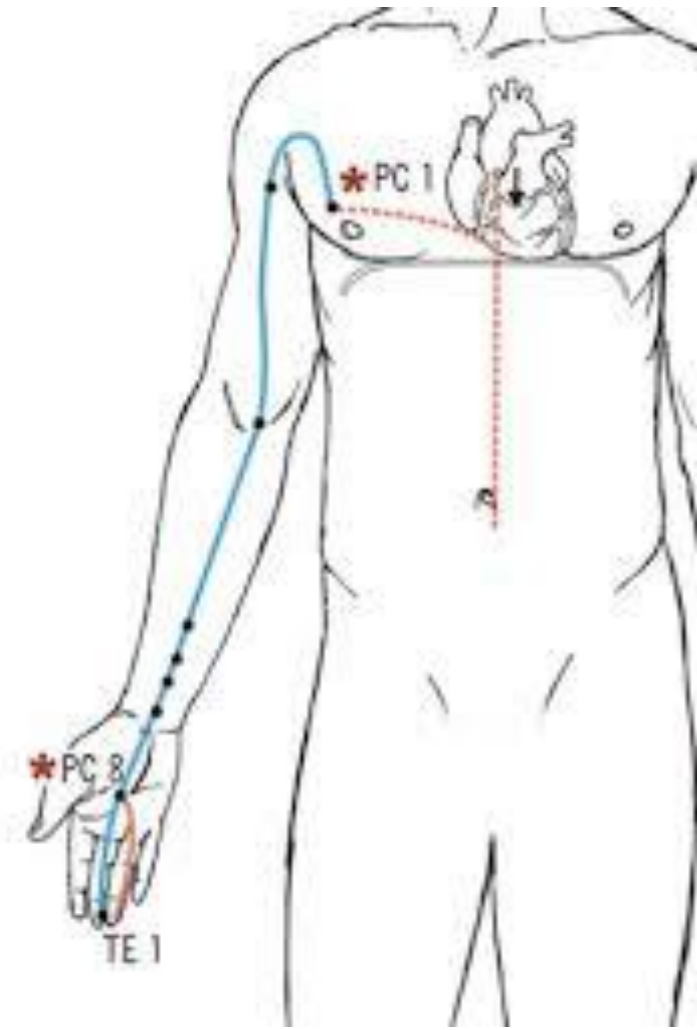
Total: 12 min

A Tour Through the Pericardium Meridian

Pericardial Meridian



- Contains 9 points
 - Begins just lateral to the cranial nipple
 - Travels down the center of the medial fore leg
 - Ends at center of middle finger
 - Man/Cats tip of 3rd digit
 - Dogs medial nail bed of 4th digit.
- Jue Yin



Further Resources

Books:

"Acupressure's Potent Points: A Guide to Self-Care for Common Ailments" by Michael Reed Gach'

"Acupressure Self-Care Handbook: Healing at Your Fingertips" by Roger Dalet, MD

"Acupressure Made Simple: Easily Treat Yourself for Common Ailments" by Deborah Bleecker, LAc

"A Manual of Acupuncture" - Peter Deadman and Mazin Al-Khafaji (also an app)

Further Resources

VA » Health Care » Whole Health » Whole Health Videos

Whole Health

- ▼ Whole Health
- Home
- ▶ Getting Started
- ▼ Veteran Resources
- Veteran Stories
- Education Handouts
- Virtual Resources
- Well-Being Programs
- Videos
- ▶ Circle of Health
- ▶ Complementary and Integrative Health
- Whole Health Facility Contacts
- ▶ Professional Resources
- ▶ More Health Care

QUICK LINKS

Whole Health Videos

- Whole Health Core Concepts
- Circle of Health
- #LiveWholeHealth
- Outreach
- Testimonials

To learn more about the positive impacts of VA's Whole Health approach, watch the videos below.

Search

Category



Live Whole Health: Acupressure



Acupressure for Head and Neck Relief, Dr. Lisa Lourey, Omaha VA Medical Center



Live Whole Health: Acupressure

Takeaways

- Acupressure derives from ancient principles and forms have been used globally for thousands of years
- Acupressure can be taught and learned as part of a self-care regimen (from today, for stress and headaches)
- Acupressure can serve as a physical anchor during hypnosis, it can help induce or deepen hypnosis, and hypnotic suggestions can enhance the benefits of acupressure: integrative medicine!

Q & A

An icon depicting two stylized human figures in white. The figure on the right has a speech bubble above it containing a question mark, symbolizing a question and answer session.

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