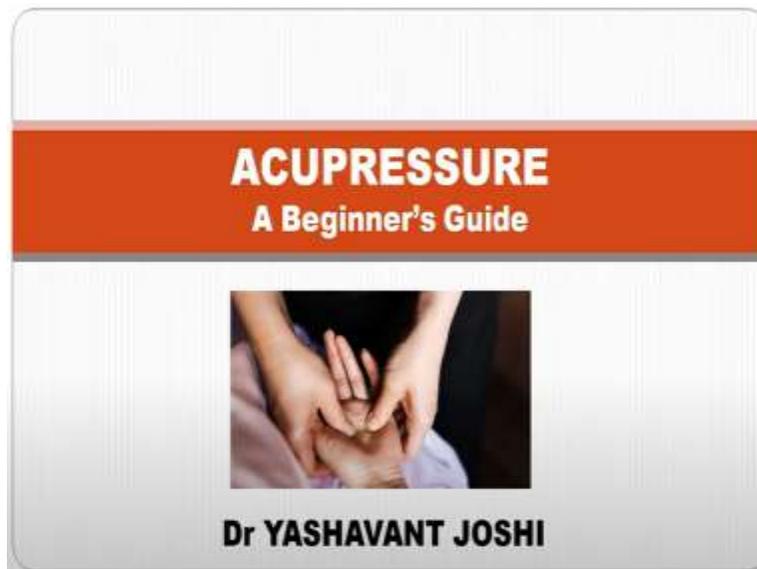


Certificate in Integrative Palliative Care – 3
Dr. Geeta Joshi
Dr. Piyush Gupta
Dr. Col. Yashavant Joshi
International Institute of Distance Learning
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

Week-06
Lecture 49: Acupressure: A Beginner's Guide

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Hello friends, Namaskar. So, after learning about meridians, let us come to acupressure. This is a sort of small guide, you know, basically people who just want to know little bit about acupressure, their curiosity basically, this is just to satisfy their curiosity.

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PRELUDE

- **Acupressure is a bodywork modality (A specific approach/style of bodywork that can be used to address different needs like Massage, Acupuncture, Chiropractic Care, Craniosacral Therapy, Myofascial Release etc.)** rooted in TCM that is used today as a complementary therapy to help with a number of health concerns.
- While researchers are still working to determine the potential benefits of the practice, studies suggest that acupressure may help alleviate pain, improve mental health, promote sleep, and reduce nausea and vomiting for certain groups.

Acupressure is a body work modality. What is body work modality? Body work I mean to say like what we do in our car, whenever you take your car to a garage then you just say yes do some body work, doors or denting, printing other things. So, in health system body work modality it is a specific approach or style of body work that can be used to address different needs like massage, acupuncture, chiropractic care, craniosacral therapy, myofascial release, etcetera.

These are all body work basically related with our health issues. So, acupressure is a body work modality rooted again in traditional Chinese medicine. That is used today and as a complementary therapy to help with a number of health concerns. While researchers are still working to determine the potential benefits of the practice, studies suggest that acupressure may help alleviate pain, improve mental health, promote sleep and reduce nausea and vomiting for certain groups.

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What is Acupressure?

- Traditionally, acupressure has been used in Chinese medicine to treat pain and disease, and to improve overall health, according to Encyclopedia Britannica.
- Today, scientific research is still ongoing to determine the efficacy and benefits of this practice. **“Acupressure has been less studied than acupuncture.”** Ingegno says. **“However, some good studies exist for specific conditions.”**
- Acupressure is **a noninvasive treatment that is considered to be generally safe** when performed by someone who is properly trained, such as a licensed massage therapist or acupuncturist.

Let us see what is acupressure. Traditionally acupressure has been used in Chinese medicine to treat pain and disease and to improve overall health according to Encyclopedia Britannica. Today's scientific research is still ongoing to determine the efficacy and benefits of the practice. Mind you acupressure has been less studied than acupuncture. In general, however, some good studies exist for specific conditions.

Acupressure is a non-invasive treatment that is considered to be generally safe when performed by someone who is properly trained such as a licensed massage therapist or acupuncturist.

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Definition of Acupressure

- **Acupressure is a technique in which pressure is applied to different points throughout the body.** according to a review on the therapy. This can be done with either your own or someone else's fingers (like a formal practitioner) or tools (such as therapeutic rollers, sticks, probes, and rings).
- **The goal of acupressure is to restore health and balance in the body and to promote relaxation.** Acupressure may help with a number of health conditions. The practice is similar to acupuncture, but no needles are used.
- "It's milder than acupuncture and can be done as part of an acupuncture or massage treatment, or as a stand-alone practice," says Tom Ingegno, a doctor of acupuncture and Chinese medicine at Charm City Integrative Health in Baltimore.

Definition of acupressure. Acupressure is a technique in which pressure is applied to different points throughout the body. According to a review on the therapy, these are the different points throughout the body and these different points are located on meridians that is what we saw in our first lecture. Acupressure can be done by either your own or someone else's fingers that means you can also do the press acupressure yourself.

You don't have to if you know about acupressure techniques you can do it yourself otherwise you have to go to some licensed therapist you can do acupressure you can press with your own fingers also or some tools certain therapeutic rollers like this is the roller with protuberance. If some pointed pressure is there, it can be done like this. If you want to roll it, there are bigger rollers also available. The goal of acupressure is to restore health and balance in the body and to promote relaxation. Acupressure may help with a number of health conditions.

The practice is similar to acupuncture, but no needles are used. Practice is similar because what we call acupoints which are located on meridians, they are the same for acupuncture where needle is required and for acupressure where you can apply pressure with your fingers. Or you can apply pressure with some tool like this. But acupoints are the same. It is milder than acupuncture and can be done as part of an acupuncture or massage treatment.

Or as a stand-alone practice. Says Tom Ingegno, a doctor of acupuncture and Chinese medicine at Charm City Integrative Health in Baltimore.

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History of Acupressure

- Acupressure originated in India and went to ancient China.
- Like many other treatments used in TCM, the goal of the practice is to support movement of qi, or life force inside the body, notes the University of Michigan Health's Rogel Cancer Center.
- According to TCM theory, qi flows through paths throughout the body, known as meridians.
- Along the meridians lie acupressure points, which can be stimulated by manual pressure with fingers or tools, heat, or needles, depending on the therapy and modality.

History of acupressure. Acupressure originated in India and went to ancient China. So, acupressure belongs to India.

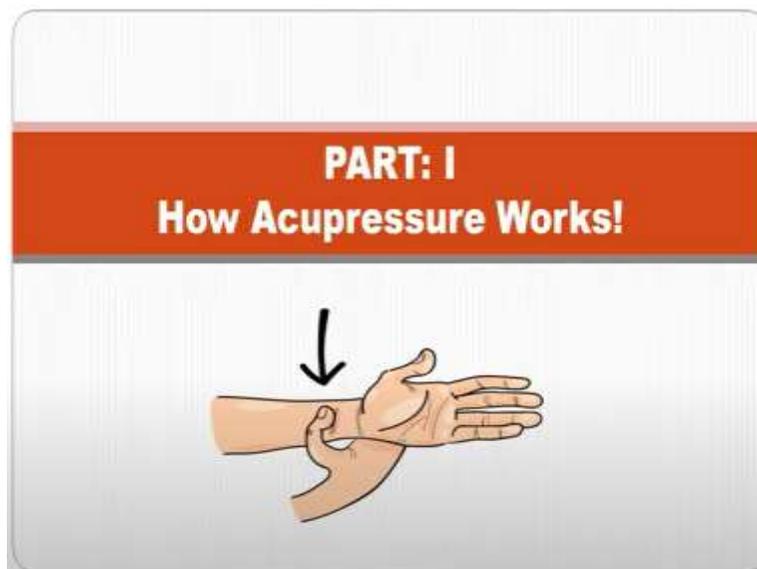
Like this pranic healing it was there, it was existing in India, but then later on it went to China and it became Qigong or Tai Chi or all those forms. Like many other treatments used in TCM. The goal of the practice is to support movement of Qi or life force inside the body, notes the University of Michigan Health Rogel Cancer Center. According to TCM theory, Qi flows through paths throughout the body known as meridians. Along the meridians lie acupressure points, which can be stimulated by manual pressure with fingers or tools, heat or needles depending on the therapy and modality.

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We will learn about acupressure in three parts. Part one, how acupressure works, very important, you must know how acupressure works. Second, possible health benefits of acupressure and third, if you want to get treated by acupressure, then how do you start, how acupressure works.

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Simple photograph. It's a hand here and the pressure is applied with the thumb.

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How Acupressure Works!

- Acupressure works by applying pressure to specific points throughout the body.
- **“These acupressure points are the same ones used in acupuncture,”** says Matthew Cavanaugh, a doctor of chiropractic based in Lafayette, Louisiana. The traditional view is that **“there are points on the meridian channels where it's easiest to connect with the flow of qi,”** he explains.
- Applying pressure to acupressure points is meant to elicit specific therapeutic effects on physical, emotional, and mental health.

Acupressure works by applying pressure to specific points throughout the body. These acupressure points are the same ones used in acupuncture. These acupoints are not different. They are the same for acupuncture as well as acupressure. The traditional view is that there are points on the meridian channels where it is easiest to connect with the flow of Qi.

Why do you this the traditionally it is being generally thought that these acupoints here, here, here located on meridians and if you put pressure on them, if you insert needle you immediately connect to the flow of Qi, flow of prana and you can adjust the flow. Applying pressure to acupressure points is meant to elicit specific therapeutic effects on physical, emotional and mental health.

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How Acupressure Works!

- In conventional Western medicine, the theory behind how acupressure works is a bit different, Dr. Cavanaugh notes. **“It tends to be viewed more in terms of affecting certain nerves for a relaxing and therapeutic effect,”** he says. Other theories, per the same review, include effects on the local tissues, brain function, neurohormonal activity, and physiologic pathways.
- **Acupressure is fairly easy to learn on your own,** Dr. Ingegno says, but if you're looking for a professional practitioner, he recommends seeking out a licensed acupuncturist or licensed massage therapist who specializes in Asian bodywork therapies. “These two professions have training in both the theory and location of these points,” he says.
- **However, people can provide acupressure to themselves or friends with some knowledge.**

However, in conventional Western medicine, the theory behind how acupressure work is little bit different. Dr. Cavanaugh notes, it tends to be viewed more in terms of affecting certain nerves for relaxing and therapeutic effect usage.

Western science generally does not believe in meridians and those acupoints. So, western scientists say, it does not, whenever you put a pressure or put a needle, it does not affect any meridian or Qi flow or anything. But there are certain nerves located here on your body and those nerves are affected and they give relaxing and therapeutic effect. Other theories for the same review include effects on local tissues, brain function, neuro hormonal activity and physiological pathways. Acupressure is fairly easy to learn on your own, but if you are looking for a professional practitioner, it is recommended you seek out a licensed acupuncturist or licensed massage therapist who specializes in Asian body work therapies.

These two professions have training in both the theory and location of these acupoints. However, people can provide acupressure to themselves or friends with some knowledge.

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We come to part two, possible health benefits of acupressure.

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ACUPRESSURE

- Traditionally, acupressure has been used in Chinese medicine to treat pain and disease, and to improve overall health, according to Encyclopedia Britannica.
- Today, scientific research is still ongoing to determine the efficacy and benefits of this practice. "Acupressure has been less studied than acupuncture," Ingegno says.
- However, some good studies exist for specific conditions.

Scientific research is still ongoing to determine the efficacy and benefits of this practice. And it is a well-known fact that acupressure has been less studied than acupuncture.

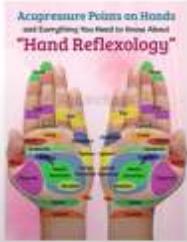
However, certain good studies exist. Let us see what they say.

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Possible Benefits of Acupressure

1. May Reduce Pain
2. May Improve Mental Health
3. May Help With Sleep Troubles
4. May Ease Nausea and Vomiting
5. May Improve the Well-Being of Cancer Survivors!

The theory that there are Reflex Points on the feet, hands and head linked to every part of the body

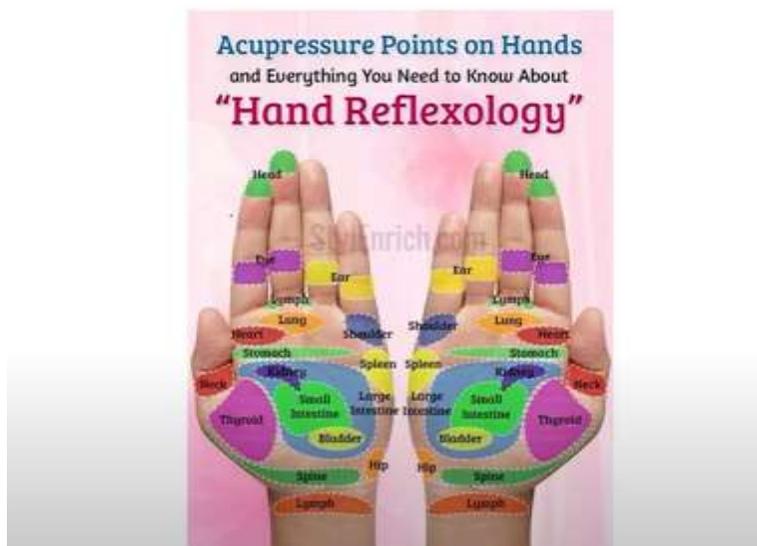


The diagram shows two hands with various colored areas labeled with body parts. The labels include: Head, Ear, Lymph, Lung, Heart, Stomach, Spleen, Kidney, Small Intestine, Large Intestine, Bladder, Hip, Spine, and Lymph. The diagram is titled 'Acupressure Points on Hands and Everything You Need to Know About "Hand Reflexology"'. The background of the diagram is pink.

Possible benefits of acupressure, it may reduce pain, may improve mental health. may help with sleep trouble, may ease nausea and vomiting, may improve the well-being of cancer survivors. The theory that there are reflex points on the feet, hands and head linked to every part of the body.

This is reflexology is the same thing, it is basically based on meridians only. So, here also if you see reflexology says even on your hand also there are certain points here, they are directly connected to your body organs. So, if you put pressure on those points then the effect goes to that particular organ like here.

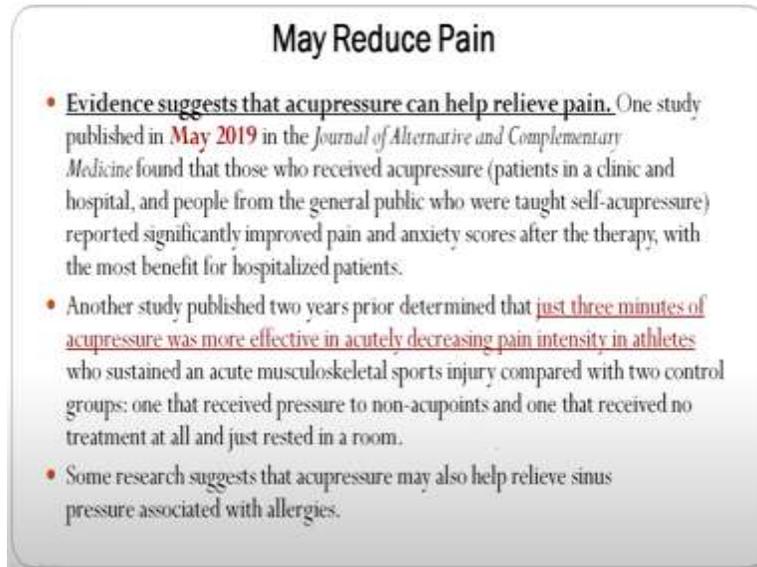
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So, in the hand also there are certain points like these two fingertips are there. They are connected with head.

So, if you insert a needle or if you put pressure on those points, the effect goes to your head. Similarly, here also the ear, neck, heart, this is reflexology. So, all these points they are being used in reflexology also.

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May Reduce Pain

- **Evidence suggests that acupressure can help relieve pain.** One study published in **May 2019** in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* found that those who received acupressure (patients in a clinic and hospital, and people from the general public who were taught self-acupressure) reported significantly improved pain and anxiety scores after the therapy, with the most benefit for hospitalized patients.
- Another study published two years prior determined that **just three minutes of acupressure was more effective in acutely decreasing pain intensity in athletes** who sustained an acute musculoskeletal sports injury compared with two control groups: one that received pressure to non-acupoints and one that received no treatment at all and just rested in a room.
- Some research suggests that acupressure may also help relieve sinus pressure associated with allergies.

It may reduce pain. This is the study of May 2019.

Another study published two years prior, 2017, determined that just three minutes of acupressure was more effective in accurately decreasing pain intensity in athletes.

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1. May Improve Mental Health

- Acupressure may help alleviate stress and improve well-being. **One study of 59 nurses in South Korea** who received acupressure for 15 minutes a day for three days **found that the practice significantly decreased stress, fatigue, and anxiety compared with the control group.**
- **Other research suggests that acupressure may help ease depression.** A systematic review and meta-analysis published in **January 2022** in the *World Journal of Psychiatry* concluded that in the 14 studies reviewed, acupressure significantly reduced symptoms in people with mild to moderate depression compared with the control groups. The authors cautioned, however, that the studies were variable in quality, and more research is needed.

Let us see number one point, may improve mental health. Acupressure may help alleviate stress and improve well-being. One study of 59 nurses in South Korea, they found that the practice significantly decreased stress, fatigue and anxiety compared with the control group. Other research suggests that acupressure may help ease depression.

This was found out in the study of January 2022.

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2. May Help With Sleep Troubles

- **Some research suggests that acupressure might help promote better sleep.**
- One meta-analysis found that although the 13 studies that met the criteria showed a lot of variability in results, in a sub analysis, there was evidence of some improvements in sleep, such as with latency (the time it takes to fall asleep) as well as overall sleep duration.
- Another study of 63 nursing home residents experiencing sleep disturbances and psychological distress found that **acupressure led to improvements in sleep quality and mental well-being.**

May help with sleep troubles. Some research suggests that acupressure might help promote better sleep. Another study of 63 nursing home residents experiencing sleep

disturbances and psychological distress found that acupressure led to improvements in sleep quality and mental well-being.

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3. May Ease Nausea and Vomiting

- Another benefit of acupressure with some scientific backing is its **anti-nausea effect**. Studies have shown particular benefit for people receiving chemotherapy and pregnant women.
- A clinical trial published in **March 2022** in *BMC Complementary Medicine and Therapies* concluded that auricular acupressure, in conjunction with anti-nausea medication, was more effective at relieving nausea and vomiting than the medication alone in people with breast cancer who were undergoing chemotherapy.
- In another study of 90 women, acupressure administered for 10 minutes four times a day was **found to reduce the severity of nausea, vomiting, and retching during pregnancy**.

May ease nausea and vomiting. Another benefit of acupressure with some scientific backing is its anti-nausea effect. Studies have shown particular benefit for people receiving chemotherapy and pregnant women. The clinical trial published in March 22 in conjunction with anti-nausea medication, it was more effective at relieving nausea and vomiting than the medication alone in people with breast cancer who were undergoing chemotherapy. So, it can be used for breast cancer during the time of chemotherapy. Another study says it was found to reduce the severity of nausea, vomiting and retching during pregnancy.

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4. May Improve the Well-Being of Cancer Survivors!

- In addition to preventing nausea and vomiting from chemotherapy, acupressure may help with a number of side effects of cancer.
- A study published **October 2018** in JNCI Cancer Spectrum found that breast cancer survivors who were trained in self-administered acupressure experienced greater improvements in symptoms of depression, anxiety, and pain, as well as improved sleep quality, compared with those who received the usual care.
- **A previous study** by the same researchers found that acupressure significantly reduced persistent fatigue in breast cancer survivors compared with the usual care.

May improve the well-being of cancer survivors. In addition to preventing nausea and vomiting from chemotherapy, acupressure may help with a number of side effects of cancer. There is a study published in October 2018. And it found that breast cancer survivors who were trained in self-administered acupressure experienced greater improvements in symptoms of depression, anxiety and pain, as well as improved sleep quality compared with those who received the usual care. A previous study by the same researchers found that acupressure significantly reduced persistent fatigue in breast cancer survivors compared with the usual care.

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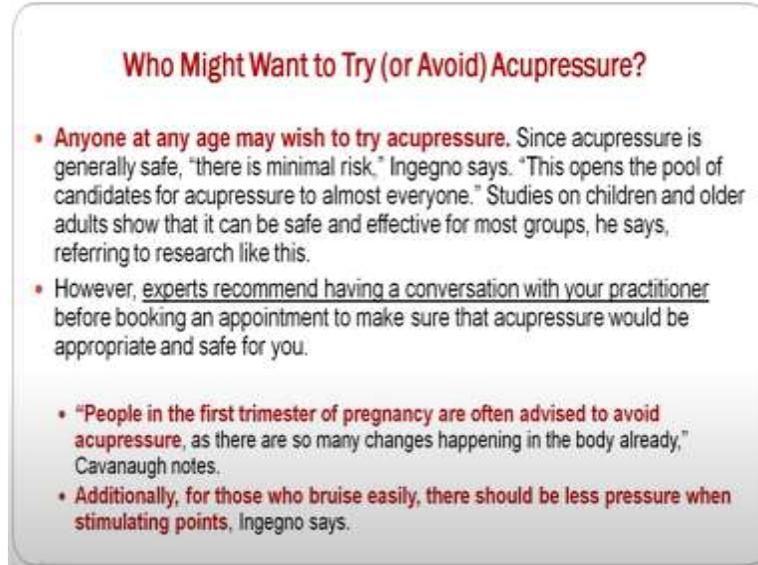
4. May Improve the Well-Being of Cancer Survivors

- Acupressure is a noninvasive treatment that is considered to be generally safe.
- However, there are potential side effects to be aware of. **"These include soreness and tenderness, dizziness, emotional release, and in rare instances, nausea and vomiting,"** says Ema Melanaphy, a certified reiki master teacher and qualified holistic acupressure practitioner based in the United Kingdom.
- **In one review, authors found reports of rare acupressure side effects like hypotension (low blood pressure), palpitations, and headache.**
- **If you have any concerns about possible side effects, speak with your provider.** Furthermore, be sure to ask your doctor before beginning any new therapy to ensure that it's the right approach for you and your health concerns.

Acupressure is a non-invasive treatment and that is considered to be generally safe. However, there are potential side effects to be aware of. These include soreness and tenderness, dizziness, emotional release and in rare instances, nausea and vomiting. In another review, authors found reports of rare side effects like hypotension, that is something like low blood pressure, palpitations and headache. If you have any concerns about possible side effects, speak with your health provider.

Furthermore, to be sure to ask your doctor before beginning any new therapy to ensure that it is the right approach for you and your health concerns.

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Who Might Want to Try (or Avoid) Acupressure?

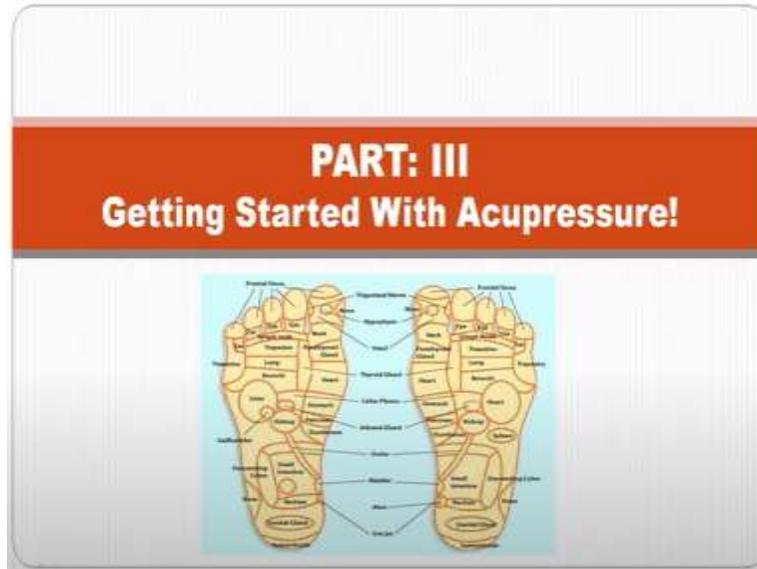
- **Anyone at any age may wish to try acupressure.** Since acupressure is generally safe, "there is minimal risk," Ingegno says. "This opens the pool of candidates for acupressure to almost everyone." Studies on children and older adults show that it can be safe and effective for most groups, he says, referring to research like this.
- However, experts recommend having a conversation with your practitioner before booking an appointment to make sure that acupressure would be appropriate and safe for you.
- "People in the first trimester of pregnancy are often advised to avoid acupressure, as there are so many changes happening in the body already," Cavanaugh notes.
- Additionally, for those who bruise easily, there should be less pressure when stimulating points, Ingegno says.

Who should try or who should avoid acupressure? Anyone at any age may wish to try acupressure because it is non-invasive. Nothing happens. Nothing is being inserted in your body.

No medication is being given. It is totally non-invasive. Therefore, anybody at any age may wish to try acupressure. Since acupressure is generally safe, there is minimal risk. This opens the pool of candidates for acupressure to almost everyone. Studies on children and older adults show that it can be safe and effective for most groups.

However, experts recommend having a conversation with your practitioner, whoever doctor you generally refer yourself, you must have conversation with the practitioners before booking an appointment. Certain precautions, people in the first trimester of pregnancy are often advised to avoid acupressure during pregnancy and particularly in the first trimester you should avoid acupressure. Additionally for those who bruise easily, there should be less pressure when stimulating points.

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How do you start with acupressure? We saw that picture of hand showing reflexology.

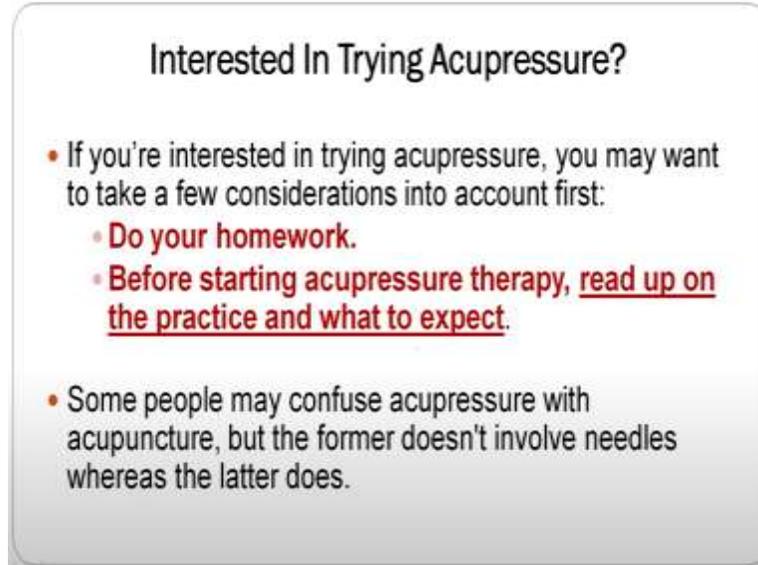
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Here again the same, the sole of our legs also represents various body organs like here.

This is heart. This is spleen. This is small intestines. This is neck. So, if you apply pressure on these points, then those parts of your body, they get connected.

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Interested In Trying Acupressure?

- If you're interested in trying acupressure, you may want to take a few considerations into account first:
 - **Do your homework.**
 - **Before starting acupressure therapy, read up on the practice and what to expect.**
- Some people may confuse acupressure with acupuncture, but the former doesn't involve needles whereas the latter does.

If you are interested in trying acupressure, you may want to take a few considerations into account first. Firstly, do your homework means find out why do you want to get treated by acupressure? What is your problem? And therefore, before starting acupressure therapy, read up on the practice and what to expect.

This is what we are doing. I am not making you acupressurist. No, I am not giving you any detail. This is not hands-on training. I am just giving you some brief about acupressure. Certain health benefits if you are interested you can study further you can do some classes also.

Some people may confuse acupressure with acupuncture but the former doesn't involve needles whereas the later does in acupuncture puncture is a simple word your skin is being punctured with needles in acupressure there is no puncturing of skin it is at best being pressure You apply pressure either by your fingers or with a tool.

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Source Recommendations

- If you're looking to go to a licensed practitioner for acupressure, try asking your family and friends if they have any referrals.
- They're a great resource, as they may have personal experience with an acupressure practitioner, and they add a level of trust and credibility you can't get from an online review or advertisement. Plus, it will save you time from having to search for an acupressure provider near you.
- Separately, note that this therapy may be offered by a licensed massage therapist, acupuncturist, or other trained practitioners, yet the scope of practice can vary.

If you are looking to go to a licensed practitioner for acupressure, try asking your family and friends if they have some referrals. There is a great resource as they may have personal experience with an acupressure practitioner and they add a level of trust and credibility you can't get from an online review or advertisement. Plus it will save you time from having to search for an acupressure provider near you. Ask your friends, relatives if they have gone to some acupressurist, you can also try the same.

Separately note that this therapy may be offered by a licensed massage therapist, acupuncturist or other trained practitioners. Here the scope of practice can vary.

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Source Recommendations

- Acupressure Shodh (Research) Prashikshan (Training) Evam Upchar (Treatment) Sansthan (**ASPEUS**) was established in 1995 at Prayagraj. They conduct various courses.
- Acupressure Science Association, India was established in 2013 at Ludhiana. It is supported by Indian Research Institute for Integrated Medicine (**IRIIM**).
- There is Indian Council of Acupressure Yoga.
- All India Association of Acupressure Reflexology (**AIAAR**) was registered in 1994, they run different courses.

In India, we have got certain institutions. One is known as SPS, Acupressure Shodh Prashikshan Evam Upchar Sansthan, ASPEUS. This is located at 1995 Prayag and they conduct various courses. Acupressure Shodh, Shodh means research, Prashikshan means training and Upchar means training.

So all the three things are being done here in this particular institute. There is Acupressure Science Association India, it was established in 2013 at Ludhiana. It is supported by Indian Research Institute for Integrated Medicine. There is Indian Council of Acupressure Yoga, All India Association of Acupressure Reflexology was registered in 1994 and they also run different courses.

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What to Expect ? Before, During, and After Acupressure

Before trying acupressure you should have a general idea of what will happen before, during, and after a session. Here are some basics to get you started:



The diagram shows a hand with various acupoints marked by small dots. Lines connect these dots to labels for different parts of the body and organs. The labels include: Eyes, Mouth, Throat, Nose, Lung, Heart, Liver, Spleen, Kidney, Stomach, Liver, Spleen, Kidney, Large Intestine, Small Intestine, Urinary Bladder, Reproductive Organ, and Navel.

What to expect when you go for acupressure? We will study in three phases before, during and after acupressure is over.

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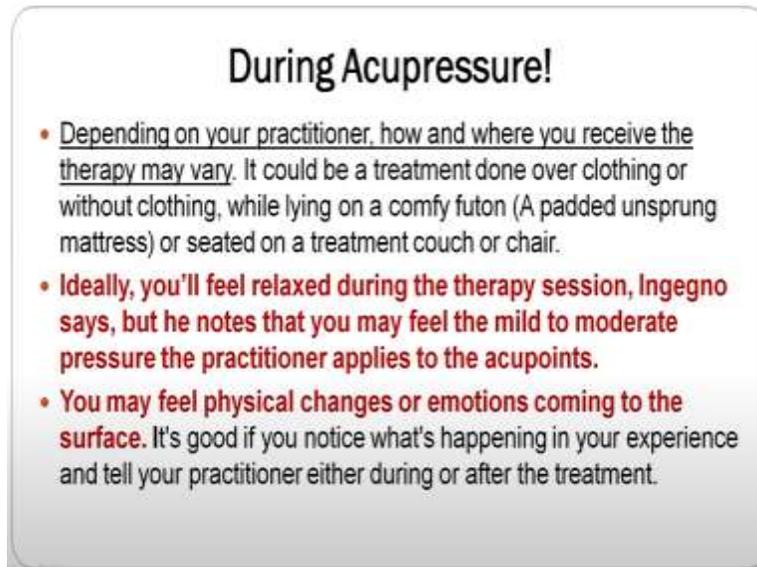
Before Acupressure!

- Before an acupressure session, you'll likely **fill out an in-depth health questionnaire**.
- This will give your practitioner a full picture of your current health and medical history.
- You should also have an **opportunity to ask questions** of your therapist about what to expect during or after your session.

You should have a general idea. Before acupressure, before an acupressure session you will likely fill out an in-depth health questionnaire. That is normal we do it whenever you go to a doctor he writes down he makes a case history so here its generally the same thing you have to fill out an in depth health questionnaire this will give your practitioner a full picture of your current health and medical history. You should also have an

opportunity to ask questions of your therapist about what to expect during or after your session during session.

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During Acupressure!

- Depending on your practitioner, how and where you receive the therapy may vary. It could be a treatment done over clothing or without clothing, while lying on a comfy futon (A padded unsprung mattress) or seated on a treatment couch or chair.
- **Ideally, you'll feel relaxed during the therapy session, Ingegno says, but he notes that you may feel the mild to moderate pressure the practitioner applies to the acupoints.**
- **You may feel physical changes or emotions coming to the surface.** It's good if you notice what's happening in your experience and tell your practitioner either during or after the treatment.

During session, depending on your practitioner, how and where you receive the therapy may vary. It could be a treatment done over clothing or without clothing, while lying on a comfy futon or seated on a treatment couch or chair.

Ideally, you will feel relaxed during the therapy session. Ingegno says, but he notes that you may feel the mild to moderate pressure the practitioner applies to the acupoints. You may feel physical changes or emotions coming to the surface. It is good if you notice what is happening in your experience and tell your practitioner either during or after the treatment.

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After Acupressure!

- The goal of acupressure is to feel symptom relief, but **depending on the severity of the condition and how well your body responds to treatment, the results may be insignificant after one session.**
- Treatment areas may feel a bit tender or sore, which is normal.
- After your session, make sure to stay hydrated, eat healthily, avoid stimulants, and hold off on strenuous exercise immediately afterward.

We saw before, during and now we will see what happens after acupressure.

The goal of acupressure is to feel symptom relief. But depending on the severity of the condition and how well your body responds to treatment, the results may be insignificant after one session. Treatment areas may feel a bit tender or sore, which is normal. After your session, make sure to stay hydrated, eat healthy, avoid stimulants and hold off on strenuous exercise immediately afterwards.

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SUMMARY

- **Acupressure is considered generally safe for most healthy people and has little risk of side effects.**
- However, it's important to tell your practitioner of any health issues you have and if you are pregnant, so you can decide together if the treatment is right for you.
- **It's possible to practice acupressure on yourself,** but you should do so under the guidance of a licensed practitioner, like a massage or acupuncture therapist who is properly trained in the method.
- You may also seek out online courses or videos from reputable sources.

Summary, acupressure is considered generally safe for most healthy people and has little risk of side effects. However, it is important to tell your practitioner of any health issues you have and if you are pregnant.

So, you can decide together if the treatment is right for you. It is possible to practice acupressure on yourself. But you should do so under the guidance of a licensed practitioner like a massage or acupuncture therapist who is properly trained in the method. You may also seek out online courses or videos from reputable sources. These are references. Thank you friends. Thank you very much.