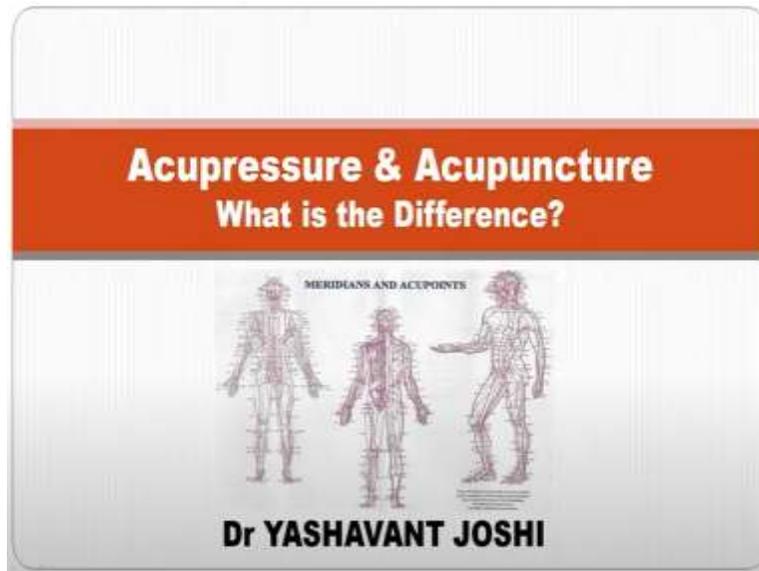


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Week-06

Lecture 52: Acupressure & Acupuncture, What is the Difference?



Hello friends. Namaskar. So we are in into six week and this particular week pertains to acupressure and acupuncture. Both are basically traditional Chinese medicine that is TCM we call it. In our previous lectures, we studied about acupressure as well as acupuncture. Now in this lecture, let us find out what is the difference between acupressure and acupuncture.

The image on this first slide shows meridians and acupoints. The first lecture in our week, in this sixth pertain to meridians because if you do not understand meridians then you cannot understand acupressure and acupuncture. Because on the meridians we have got acupoints, I repeat on the meridians we have got acupoints and on these acupoints acupressure they put pressure on those points and acupuncture they insert needles over there and then thereafter we studied about acupressure and acupuncture and now let us see the difference between these two.

PRELUDE

- **Now, you've heard of acupuncture and acupressure.** Chances are, you have at least one friend who raves about their awesomeness, or maybe you've even considered booking yourself a session with a practitioner.
- **But you may be like other Westerners, questioning how these ancient methods *actually* work? Or wondering what the difference between acupuncture and acupressure is?** We will explore both questions in this lecture.

Now you have heard of acupuncture and acupressure, chances are you have at least one friend who raved about their awesome or maybe you have even considered booking yourself a session with a practitioner.

Must be having some friend, he must have done acupressure, acupuncture and he must be talking a lot about it. With acupressure, acupuncture his problems were sorted out, health problems. But you may be like other westerners questioning how these ancient methods actually work or wondering what the difference between acupuncture and acupressure is. We will explore both these questions now in this particular lecture.



Here you see the needles.

I also give you the demonstration that it is very easy to insert the needle. There is no fear at all, just sometimes little bit of tingling sensation there. This needle, acupuncture needle, they are not like injection. They are very very thin and sharp goes inside the skin, you never come to know about it.

Acupuncture &, Acupressure

Acupuncture and acupressure are both Traditional Chinese Medicine treatments, rooted in the idea that our bodies house channels (meridians) through which our life energy flows. Both methods aim to improve or correct energy flow by stimulating meridian points.

- 1. The main difference between the two techniques is that acupuncture uses thin needles while acupressure uses firm pressure.**
- 2. There may be a significant difference in the training of the practitioners as well.** Acupressure is commonly offered by massage therapists who have little diagnostic training in Chinese medicine, but may have an intimate knowledge of body tissues, while acupuncture is offered by board-certified licensed acupuncturists. They each have different advantages.

Acupuncture and acupressure are both TCM, traditional Chinese medicines.

They are rooted in the idea that our bodies house channels, we call them meridians. They are like highways. In science, what we say that we have got blood circulation system emanating from the heart, it goes all around and again comes back to the heart. Exactly similarly, such meridians do exist, cannot be seen, cannot take the photograph. And through these meridians, our life energy in China, they call it Qi, in India we call it Pran, it flows.

Both methods aim to improve or correct energy flow by simulating meridian points. Let us see the first main difference between the two techniques and that is acupuncture uses thin needles. I showed you in the morning. It can't be seen, can you see it in the camera? Very thin and sharp needle, in my right hand that is a needle and in the left there is a small plastic pipe which helps to insert the needle. This is a very easy process, I will do the needle insertions, I can do like this also. I will take it out.

So in acupuncture, they use very sharp thin needles whereas in acupressure, they use firm pressure finger. Sometimes when you require more pressure, you may use thumb. You can use some tools also like this. This is the major difference that means acupressure is non-invasive nothing goes in your body but acupuncture is invasive because a needle

goes inside your skin. Second major difference is in the training of the practitioners. Acupressure is commonly offered by massage therapists. If anybody is doing a massage, he can immediately understand.

He has to just find out all those acupoints and those massage therapists can be done over there. It becomes a massage acupressure. We have little diagnostic training in Chinese medicine, but may have an intimate knowledge of body tissues, while acupuncture is offered by broad certified licensed acupuncturists. They each have different advantages. So, two major differences: acupuncture is invasive, requires a needle insertion, whereas acupressure is non-invasive, requires pressure by fingers or some tool.

Second, for acupuncture, more training is required, whereas for acupressure, less training is needed. Even a massage therapist can do acupressure massages.

What is the Difference?

Western medical communities have been slow to back acupuncture and acupressure, but in the past few decades, these treatments have stood the test of science. They're now commonly prescribed by western doctors as complementary treatments for a wide variety of issues:

- **Acupuncture requires needles**, while acupressure uses only pressure from the hands.
- **Acupuncture treats specific medical conditions, while acupressure can be used for prevention and treatment.**
- **Acupressure uses firm pressure and massage to stimulate the meridians** (also called acupoints), while acupuncture uses hair-thin needles to stimulate those acupoints.
- In acupuncture, the doctor inserts a hair-thin needle gently and painlessly into acupuncture points along your body's meridians (or energy lines). In acupressure, the doctor uses their fingers rather than needles to apply pressure on the points.
- There may be a **significant difference in the training of the practitioners as well.**

What is the difference? Acupuncture requires needles while acupressure uses only pressure from the hands. Second, acupuncture treats specific medical conditions while acupressure can be used only for prevention and treatment. It is only for prevention and treatment. It cannot go deeper into the health sciences.

Third, acupressure uses firm pressure and massage to stimulate the meridians. These are the meridians, they are going like this. It makes use of firm pressure, while acupuncture uses hair thin needles to stimulate those acupoints. In acupuncture, the doctor inserts a hair thin needle gently and painlessly into acupuncture points along your body's

meridians. In acupressure, the doctor uses the fingers rather than needles to apply pressure on the points.

And there is a significant difference in the training of the practitioners as well.

1. Acupuncture Is A Practice That Uses Needles To Stimulate Specific Points On The Body

- The goal of acupuncture is to relieve pain and improve overall health. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, over 2,000 acupuncture points on the human body correspond to different organs and systems. By stimulating these acupressure points, practitioners believe they can help correct imbalances and restore health.
- **Acupuncture is typically done with thin, sterile needles inserted into the skin. The needles are often left in place for 20-30 minutes.** Some people report a tingling sensation or mild discomfort when the needles are first inserted, but this usually goes away quickly.
- Acupuncture is effective for various conditions, including headaches, arthritis, menstrual cramps, and low back pain. It may also be helpful for nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy and pregnancy. A growing body of research suggests that acupuncture can effectively treat certain medical conditions. However, more research is of the essence to confirm these findings.

Let's see the same thing in detail. Acupuncture is a practice that uses needles to stimulate specific points on the body. The goal of acupuncture is to relieve pain and improve overall health. According to TCM, over 2000 acupuncture points on the human body correspond to different organs and systems.

By stimulating these acupressure points, practitioners believe they can help correct imbalances and restore health. Acupuncture is typically done with thin sterile needles inserted into the skin. The needles are often left in place for 20 to 30 minutes. The needle is being kept inside. So, that tingling sensation plus whatever nerves or anything on to that particular meridians it remains affected.

Some people report a tingling sensation or mild discomfort when the needles are first inserted but this usually goes away quickly. Acupuncture is effective for various conditions including headaches, arthritis, menstrual cramps and low back pain. It may also be helpful for nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy and pregnancy. A growing body of research suggests that acupuncture can effectively treat certain medical conditions. However, more research is of the essence to confirm these findings.

2. Acupressure Applies Pressure To The Points With The Hands

- Acupressure is based on the principle of qi, or life energy, which flows through the body along energy pathways called meridians. By applying pressure to specific points along these meridians, acupressure can help to unblock qi and restore balance within the body.
- Acupressure is often compared to acupuncture, another TCM technique that uses needles to stimulate points in the body. First, acupuncture requires needles, while acupressure uses only pressure from the hands. Second, acupuncture treats specific medical conditions, while acupressure can be used for prevention and treatment.
- Despite these differences, both acupuncture and acupressure share a common goal: to improve qi flow and restore balance within the body. Research has shown that both techniques can effectively treat pain, stress, anxiety, and other health concerns. If you need to try acupressure, there are many easy-to-learn self-care methods that you can practice at home.

Two, acupressure applies pressure to the points with the hands. Acupressure is based on the principle of chi or life energy or prana which flows through the body along energy pathways called meridians. By applying pressure to specific points along these meridians, acupressure can help to unblock Qi and restore balance within the body. Acupressure is often compared to acupuncture, another TCM technique that uses needles to stimulate points in the body. First, acupuncture requires needles.

while acupressure uses only pressure from the hands. Second, acupuncture treats specific medical conditions while acupressure pressure can be used for prevention and treatment. Despite these differences, both acupuncture and acupressure share a common goal to improve chi flow and restore balance within the body. Research has shown that both techniques can effectively treat pain, stress, anxiety and other health concerns. If you need to try acupressure, there are many easy to learn self care methods that you can practice at home.



Both the differences are in acupressure, pressure is implied here by thumbs. In acupuncture, The needle has been inserted here.

3. Acupuncture Treats A Variety Of Conditions, While Acupressure Is Mainly Used For Pain Relief

- Although often grouped together, acupuncture and acupressure are different practices with different origins and purposes. **Acupuncture is a form of TCM that has been in use for centuries to treat various conditions.** The practice involves inserting thin needles into the skin at specific points along the body, stimulating the energy flow or Qi.
- **Acupressure is a relatively modern practice for pain relief.** It involves applying pressure to particular points on the body using the hands, elbows, or feet.
- **While both can effectively relieve pain, acupuncture is more versatile and can treat many conditions.** Therefore, it is important to consult a qualified practitioner to determine which approach suits your needs.

Third difference, acupuncture treats a variety of conditions while acupressure is mainly used for pain relief. Although often grouped together, acupressure and acupuncture are different practices with different origins and purposes. Acupuncture is a form of TCM that has been in use for centuries to treat various conditions.

The practice involves inserting thin needles into the skin at specific points along the body stimulating the energy flow or Qi. Acupressure is a relatively modern practice for pain relief. It involves applying pressure to particular points on the body using the hands,

elbows or feet or even a tool. While both can effectively relieve pain, acupuncture is more versatile and can treat many conditions. That means if you talk only from health point of view, acupuncture is more useful, more versatile, whereas acupressure can be generally used only for pain relief and not for any other specific conditions.

Therefore, it is important to consult a qualified practitioner to determine which approach suits your needs.

4. Acupuncture Is Typically More Expensive Than Acupressure, But May Be Covered By Insurance!

- Acupuncture is typically more expensive than acupressure because acupuncture requires special training and equipment, whereas anyone with strong hands can perform acupressure.
- Even though acupuncture is usually more expensive than acupressure, many people prefer it because it's often more effective.
- In addition, some insurance companies will cover at least part of the cost of acupuncture treatments, making it more affordable for people who want to try this treatment option.

Fourth, acupuncture is typically more expensive than acupressure but may be covered by insurance. Naturally, acupuncture is expensive because the training is very expensive and there are very less number of acupuncturists in India. Acupuncture is typically more expensive than acupressure because acupuncture requires special training and equipment whereas anyone with strong hands can perform acupressure. In acupuncture, you require sterile needles and they are very costly.

And again my dear friends, once a needle has been used, it cannot be used any second time. You have to just throw it away as medical waste. Even though acupuncture is usually more expensive than acupressure, many people prefer it because it is often more effective. In addition, some insurance companies will cover at least part of the cost of acupuncture treatments, making it more affordable for people who want to try this treatment option.

Top Health Insurance Companies PLANS FOR ACUPUNCTURE

- **Aditya Birla Health Insurance:** Aditya Birla health insurance covers new and alternative diseases, including acupuncture. You can get coverage for acupuncture therapy and all AYUSH treatments from this company.
- **Bajaj Allianz Health Insurance:** Bajaj Allianz health insurance company covers acupuncture therapy. They offer almost all the plans covering AYUSH treatment.
- **ACKO Health Insurance:** ACKO offers reimbursement for in-patient AYUSH treatments. It provides quick settlements, and No paperwork is needed for treatments. You can also get acupuncture therapy under the AYUSH treatments.
- **Care Health Insurance:** Care health insurance also covers the costs of AYUSH treatments. They introduce new coverings for alternative medicine, including acupuncture therapy.

In India, we have certain health insurance companies which give insurance, they have insurance for acupuncture.

There is Aditya Birla Health Insurance, there is Bajaj Allianz Health Insurance, there is Acko Health Insurance and Care Health Insurance. These are the four companies I just noted down. There will be many more. They provide insurance for acupuncture as well as Ayurvedic treatment also. Only a licensed practitioner can perform acupuncture, while anyone can do.

ACUPRESSURE



Acupressure.

5. Only A Licensed Practitioner Can Perform Acupuncture,
While Anyone Can do Acupressure

- Though acupuncture and acupressure are based on the same principles, some important distinctions exist between the two practices.
- **Acupressure is a relatively simple technique that anyone can learn.** It involves applying pressure to particular points on the body using the hands, elbows, or feet.
- Like acupuncture, acupressure restores balance and promotes health by stimulating the flow of qi. However, it is a much safer treatment option because it does not involve needles. As such, it is often useful in a self-care practice or as an adjunct to other forms of treatment.

If you know the acupoints, if you know the lines of meridians, and if you are a good massage therapist, you can do acupressure massage also. Even acupressure can be done by you on your body. It is very easy. But it is not so with the acupuncture. Acupressure is relatively simple technique that anyone can learn.

It involves applying pressure to particular points on the body using the hands, elbow or feet. Like acupuncture, acupressure restores balance and promotes health by stimulating the flow of Qi. However, it is a much safer treatment option because it does not involve needles as such. It is often useful in a self-care practice or as an adjunct to other forms of treatment.

6. Acupuncture Is Popular In China, While Acupressure Is More Popular In Asia

- **Acupuncture is more widely common in China**, primarily by traditional Chinese medicine practitioners, while **acupressure is more prevalent in Asia**.
- This difference is unclear, but it may be due to the differing philosophies of traditional Chinese and Asian medicine.
- Whatever the reason, acupuncture and acupressure are useful treatments that can improve health and well-being.

Number six, acupuncture is popular in China while acupressure is more popular in Asia.

Acupuncture is more widely common in China primarily by traditional Chinese medicine practitioners while acupressure is more prevalent in Asia. This difference is unclear however, but it may be due to the differing philosophies of traditional Chinese and Asian medicines. Whatever the reason, acupuncture and acupressure are useful treatments that can improve health and well-being.

How Both Systems work?

- To understand how acupuncture and acupressure work, you first have to **familiarize yourself with the idea of a meridian system**. Meridians are a foundational TCM concept, but up until recently, you wouldn't hear of them in any western medical office.
- **Meridians are invisible pathways or channels, through which your Qi (vital life energy), Xue (Blood), Jinye (Body Fluids), Jing (Essence), and Shen (Spirit) flow. Along these channels, there are hundreds of meridian points (also called acupoints) that can be stimulated via acupressure or acupuncture to improve the flow of these essential substances.**

How both systems work? To understand how acupuncture and acupressure work, you first have to familiarize yourself with the idea of a meridian system. And that was our first lesson in this week.

What is meridian system? There are 12 major meridians, 6 on each side. And there are 8 extraordinary meridians that we have generally learnt about. Meridians, again we will just go over a little. Meridians are invisible pathways or channels through which your Qi, vital force, blood, Jinye, Jing and Shen flow. Along these channels, there are hundreds of meridian points also called acupoints that can be stimulated by acupressure, acupuncture to improve the flow of these essential substances.

How Both Systems work?

- For the skeptics here, it can be helpful to understand the bodily mechanisms behind acupuncture and acupressure. **In essence, the targeted application of pressure or insertion of tiny needles initiates the body's profound self-healing abilities.**
- In response to this external stimulation of the meridians, the body will increase blood and lymph circulation, release endorphins, alter hormonal signaling, and more.

For the skeptics, for the people who are having doubts about the existence of meridians, it can be helpful to understand the bodily mechanisms behind acupuncture and acupressure. In essence, the targeted application of pressure, targeted application of the pressure or the insertion of tiny needles initiates the body's profound self-healing abilities. Body reacts. And when I say body reacts, means it is reacting to defend itself.

When you put pressures, body reacts. When you insert a needle, body reacts. Now, when the body reacts, that means in response to this external stimulation of the meridians, the body will increase blood and lymph circulation, release endorphins, alter hormonal signaling and more. Body reacts. It is pushing the blood.

It is pushing the lymphs over there. And when blood and everything comes on that particular part of the body, that part becomes active and when it becomes active, it has got life force in it, whatever healing was required that has been achieved.

**Which is right for you?
Acupuncture or Acupressure?**

There are a few factors to consider when deciding which method is right for you.

1. What issues do you want to treat?

- **Acupuncture is commonly used to treat illnesses that could be diagnosed by a doctor.** Examples include chronic illnesses, infertility, strained muscles, and insomnia. It's believed that acupuncture is better at treating these complex issues because the method allows acupuncturists to stimulate many meridian points at once for extended amounts of time.
- **Acupressure is more commonly used to treat minor ailments or isolated symptoms like nausea and headaches.**

Which is right for you, acupuncture or acupressure. There are few factors to consider when deciding which method is right for you. Firstly, what issues do you want to treat? What are your problems, health problems? You must understand that acupuncture is commonly used to treat illnesses that could be diagnosed by a doctor. Acupuncture can treat certain medical conditions also. Examples include chronic illness, infertility, strained muscles and insomnia.

It is believed that acupuncture is better at treating these complex issues because the method allows acupuncture is to stimulate many meridian points at once for extended amount of time. I just said when a needle has been inserted, it has to be, it needs to be kept for 10 to 40 minutes. Acupressure is more commonly used to treat minor ailments or isolated symptoms like nausea and headache.

Which is right for you? Acupuncture or Acupressure?

2. What is the training of the practitioners you have access to?

- Look at effectiveness, experience, training and recommendations. Ultimately, the skill of the practitioner in treating your problem is more important than the modality.

3. Are you sensitive to needles?

- Even though acupuncture is virtually pain free, patients who are highly sensitive to needles may not be comfortable with the technique. In these cases, practitioners can apply acupressure as an alternative.

4. Do you want to treat yourself at home?

- Acupuncture is legally performed by licensed practitioners and should not be done at home. If you're looking to remedy issues yourself, acupressure is the way to go.

What is the training of the practitioner you have access to? You have to see. The doctor what you are going to visit, doctor I mean to say the acupressurist or acupuncturist, what is his qualification or experience.

Look at his effectiveness, training and recommendations. Ultimately, the skill of the practitioner in treating your problem is more important than the modality. Are you sensitive to needles? Even though acupuncture is virtually pain-free, patients who are highly sensitive to needles may not be comfortable with the technique. In these cases, practitioners can apply acupressure as an alternative. If you do not like needling around, if you have got a fear of needles injection, then it is better to avoid acupuncture and you should accept acupressure.

Do you want to treat yourself at home? Acupuncture is legally performed by licensed practitioners and should not be done at home. Acupuncture, it can't be done at home by you, by yourself, on your own body. But if you are looking to remedy issues yourself, acupressure is the way to go.

CONCLUSION

- So, there you have it! The next time someone asks whether acupuncture and acupressure are the same, you can confidently explain that they're quite different.
- Acupuncture involves the insertion of very thin needles into particular points on the body, while acupressure uses pressure (from either the hands or elbows) to stimulate those same points.
- Both methods root themselves in TCM practices and philosophies, and both can be used to promote relaxation, relieve pain, and improve overall wellness. So, if you're looking for a natural way to feel better, give acupuncture or acupressure a try – or both!

So in the conclusion, there you have it. The next time someone ask you whether acupuncture and acupressure are the same, you can confidently explain that they are quite different, they are not the same.

Acupuncture involves the insertion of very thin needles into particular points of the body, while acupressure uses pressure. This is what you have to just tell them, this is the major difference and they are not the same. Both methods root themselves into the same practices, philosophies and both can be used to promote relaxation, relieve pain and improve overall wellness. So, if you are looking for a natural way to feel better, give acupuncture or acupressure or try or you can try both the systems.

This is all about acupuncture and acupressure. And in our next lecture, we will go to another interesting topic, ear piercing. Ear piercing is very common in India. Children, they have ear piercing done on both the ears. Some of them, they wear rings also. So, the very interesting topic will come up and that will be the last topic of week number six about acupressure and acupuncture. Thanks. Thank you.