



POSITIVE POINTS

12 ACUPRESSURE SELF CARE POWER POINTS FOR COMMON CONDITIONS RELATED TO HIV/AIDS

PURPOSE

To provide a self care handout on 12 key Acupressure points known to be useful in addressing, and potentially minimizing/ alleviating, some of the common conditions related to HIV/AIDS.

- General immune enhancement
- Fatigue
- Digestive Problems
- Depression
- Neuropathy

This tool can assist in cultivating on-going, daily self care to help effectively face the physical, emotional, and psychological impact of AIDS and HIV. It is hoped that this material will be useful to:

- People living with HIV/AIDS to utilize as a self care tool.
- Caregivers and family members who support those living with HIV/AIDS
- Acupressure practitioners who work with HIV/AIDS clients

DEFINITION AND ADVANTAGES OF ACUPRESSURE

Acupressure is an ancient healing art and branch of Chinese medicine that uses pressure on key points on the surface of the skin to stimulate the body's natural self-curative abilities. When pressed, these points release muscular tension and endorphins, the body's natural pain killers. The gentle pressure also promotes the circulation of blood and the body's life force (Chi) to aid healing. Acupressure can also help restore emotional balance by releasing accumulated tension caused by repressed feelings.

Some of the advantages of acupressure's healing touch are:

- safe to do on self and others (heeding precautions)
- no side effects from drugs since none are used
- no equipment needed other than your two hands
- can be practiced anytime and anywhere

Acupressure is not a substitute for medical care especially in treatment of those with HIV/AIDS. It is, however, an appropriate complementary modality to use in conjunction with current Western Medical treatment of HIV/AIDS and related conditions which arise from the disease process and side effects of the medications currently being used.

SELECTION OF ACUPRESSURE POINTS

The 12 points included in this handout were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Known usefulness in addressing the condition of concern. Each of the 12 points is documented in the references listed at the end of this handout as beneficial for the conditions indicated.
2. Each of these 12 points address two or more of the common conditions related to HIV/AIDS. While there are additional points that usefully address these conditions, those selected for inclusion in this handout offer the "greatest bang for the buck."
3. Ease in locating the points on the body. Each of these 12 have clear, easy to find landmarks on the body making it easy for the lay person to find and hold these points.
4. Ability to administer Acupressure to self. The 12 points are all located on the front of the body or easily accessible to reach (B 23 / B 27, and GB 20) for self treatment. It is noted that one of the common complaints of HIV/AIDS patients is joint pain / muscular stiffness. Optimal points to address these concerns are mostly found on the back (Gall Bladder and Bladder Points), so this common complaint has **not** been addressed in this handout.



NAMES OF ACUPRESSURE POINTS

Each of the 12 points has an identification number based on the referencing system used by professional acupressurists and acupuncturists. Abbreviations refer to one of the meridians lines of the body. Meridians are the energy pathways that connect the various acupressure/acupuncture points and the internal organs. For example, ST 36 refers to the 36th point on the Stomach Meridian. It is not necessary to know the Meridian lines or these numbers to practice self-acupressure.

Each of the points also was named poetically, originally with a Chinese character. The imagery of each name gives insight into a point's benefits or locations. For instance, Three Miles was so named because it gives a person an extra three miles of energy. Sea of Vitality replenishes your deep reservoir of vitality. Letting Go helps one let go of tension, frustration, and stress. The names can serve as a meditation tool or powerful affirmation you can visualize to achieve optimal benefit while holding the points.

PRECAUTIONS TO CONSIDER

Because HIV/AIDS is often a serious illness, the following cautions are suggested:

- apply pressure in a slow, rhythmic manner and hold points with gentle to moderate finger pressure. Do not press in a forceful, jarring, or abrupt manner.
- use abdominal points cautiously especially if ill or having chronic digestive problems.
- do not work directly on a serious burn, ulcerous condition, or an infection. Medical care is recommended here.
- do not work on a recently formed scar. For the first month after injury or surgery, do not apply pressure directly on the affected site. Gentle continuous holding a few inches from the injury will stimulate the area and help it heal.
- Lymph areas (groin, throat below ears, outer breast near armpit) should only be touched lightly and not pressed due to sensitivity.

PRIMARY REFERENCES

Gach, Michael Reed, *Acupressure's Potent Points: A Guide to Self-Care for Common Ailments*. New York: Bantam Books 1990

Acupressure Institute, *Basic Acupressure: The Extraordinary Channels & Points*. Berkeley, Ca.: The Acupressure Institute 1995

Ellis, Andrew, Wiseman, Nige, and Boss, Ken, *Grasping the Wind: An Exploration into the Meaning of Chinese Acupuncture Point Names*. Brookline, Mass: Paradigm Publications 1989

Lade, Arnie, *Acupuncture Points: Images and Functions*. Seattle: Eastland Press 1989

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

For further information on Career Training (Intensives and Workshops), Acupressure Referrals, Books, Reference Charts, Audio Tapes, or Videos contact:

THE ACUPRESSURE INSTITUTE
1533 Shattuck Avenue
Berkeley, California 94709
(800) 442-2232 (Outside California)
(510) 845-1059
www.acupressure.com





ST 36 THREE MILES

Location: Four finger widths below the kneecap on outside of leg. A muscle should flex when you move foot up and down when on correct point.

Benefits: Revitalizes the whole body especially the immune system. Releases physical fatigue. Regulates appetite imbalances and strengthens and aids digestion. Aids depression. Useful point for neuropathy.

Touch Tips: **Sitting position:** Place your fists on the points and briskly rub for one minute. Repeat on other side. **Lying position:** Place your right heel on the outside of the left shinbone on the point beneath the knee. Briskly rub for one minute, then reverse and rub right leg.

B 23 and 47 SEA OF VITALITY

Location: In the lower back, between the second and third lumbar vertebrae, two to four finger widths away from the spine at the waist level.

Benefits: Fortifies **immune system**, relieves low back aches, **fatigue**, and **depression**. Relieves **indigestion**, abdominal pain, and stomachaches.

Touch Tips: Rub and then hold.

1. Place knuckles of both hands on lower back and rub vigorously enough to create warmth. Breathe deep while rubbing for one minute.
2. Place your hands on the waist so your thumbs are on the outer edges of the rope like muscles with thumbs about 4 inches apart. Apply firm, steady pressure toward the spine for one minute (B 47).
3. To stimulate the inner points (B 23), press the top of the muscles two finger widths from the spine. Apply as much pressure as you can without discomfort for one minute.



CV 6 SEA OF ENERGY

Location: Two fingers below the naval (also known as the Hara)

Benefits: Strengthens whole body, especially the **immune system**. Relieves extreme fatigue and dizziness and confusion that results from the chronic **fatigue** syndrome. Relieves abdominal pain, **indigestion** and chronic diarrhea or constipation.

Touch Tips: In either a sitting or lying position, place your finger tips into the center of the abdominal area between the naval and pubic bone. Gradually press one to two inches deep inside the lower abdomen. Close your eyes as you breathe deeply.



K 27 ELEGANT MANSION

Location: In depression directly below lower border of collar bone.

Benefits: Strengthens the **immune system**. Relieves **depression**. Good for nausea and **digestion**. Helps all meridians run in their correct direction; brings up energy and breath.

Touch Tips: Place your finger tips below the throat on the two knobs of the collarbone. Move directly down to the first indentation below. Firmly press the hollow areas taking long, slow, deep breaths for one minute.



LI 4 JOINING THE VALLEY

Location: In webbing between the thumb and index finger at highest spot of the muscle when thumb and index finger are brought close together.

Benefits: Benefits the **immune system**. Relieves **depression**. Helpful with **neuropathy** (especially upper extremities), shoulder pain and headaches.

Touch Tips: Place the thumb of one hand in the webbing between the thumb and first finger of the other hand with fingertips on the palm behind the thumb. Gradually squeeze the thumb and index finger of the hand applying pressure firmly, angling the pressure in toward the bone connecting to the index finger. Take long, slow, deep breaths as you press into the webbing for one minute. Reverse hands to hold the same point on the other hand.



TW 5 OUTER GATE

Location: On outside of forearm two fingers above wrist crease between wrist bones

Benefits: Benefits the **immune system**. Relieves **fatigue**. Helpful with **neuropathy** (especially upper extremities), shoulder and wrist pain.

Touch Tips: Use your thumb to rub and press this forearm point of each arm.





LV 3 SUPREME RUSHING

Location: On top of foot, in the valley between the big and second toes

Benefits: Boosts the **immune system** and invigorates and clears the whole system. Relieves **fatigue**. Helpful with **neuropathy** (especially lower extremities), weakness in legs and inability to walk.

Touch Tips: Place your middle and index fingers on the tops of the feet between the big and second toes. Briskly rub in the groove between the two bones that join these toes for 30 seconds. You can also rub these points with the heel of your opposite foot from a sitting position.

CV 17 SEA OF TRANQUILITY

Location: At the center of the sternum at the level of the heart.

Benefits: Boosts the **immune system** and regulates the thymus gland. Relieves **depression**.

Touch Tips: With palms together, use the back of your thumbs to press CV 17 firmly on the breastbone at the level of your heart. With eyes closed, concentrate on slow, even, deep breaths into your heart for two minutes or more. You can also use all the fingertips of one hand to gently press the center of your breastbone as you take long, slow deep breaths.



LI 11 CROOKED POND

Location: In elbow joint at the upper end of the elbow crease.

Benefits: Special tonic point which relieves **immune system** weakness. Helpful with **neuropathy** (especially upper extremities) and elbow problems.

Touch Tips: Bend one arm in front of you with palm down. Breathe deeply while pressing the point on the outside of the forearm where the wrist crease ends for a minute. Switch sides and do the same point on the opposite elbow.



LU 1 LETTING GO

Location: On the upper outside portion of the chest in the depression three finger widths below the collarbone

Benefits: Relieves **fatigue** and **depression**. Helps release emotional repression, confusion and chest tension.

Touch Tips: Using your fingertips, cross your hands on your chest and firmly press both LU 1 points for one minute.



GV 24.5 THE THIRD EYE POINT

Location: Directly between the eyebrows in the indentation where the bridge of the nose meets the center of the forehead.

Benefits: Relieves **depression** as well as emotional imbalances. Aids chronic **fatigue** complaints especially irritability, confusion, and headaches.

Touch Tips: In a sitting position with palms together, use the middle and index fingers to lightly touch the Third Eye point. Concentrate deeply on the point and breathe deeply for two minutes. May also be done in a lying position by placing the middle finger of the right hand on the third eye point. The finger tips of the left hand can hold the center of the breastbone (CV 17) to produce a calming combination. Hold these points while breathing deeply for one minute.

GB 20 GATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Location: On the back of the neck in the hollow below the occipital ridge (between the trapezius and sternocleidomastoid muscles)

Benefits: Relieves **depression** and headaches, neck pain and insomnia that may impact fatigue

Touch Tips: Place thumbs beneath the base of the skull into the hollow spots between the two vertical neck muscles. Apply pressure gradually as you slowly tilt the head back and breathe deeply for one minute.

