

HEALTH REPORT

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REDUCE FATIGUE WITH ACUPUNCTURE/ACUPRESSURE

Blockages of energy flows in the body have long been recognized by practitioners of Chinese medicine as the cause of reduced health and disease. This “life energy” that flows through the body, known as Qi (pronounced chee) is responsible for illness when it is not flowing properly. Restoring the natural flow of Qi returns the body to harmony and positive results occur. Acupressure can help to return the flow as well.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) is one such blockage problem that can be successfully treated with Acupuncture. Whether a person subscribes to a Western definition of Acupuncture helping due to a release of endorphins in the brain, or the Eastern thinking that has Qi now flowing freely through the body’s meridians — what’s most important is that Acupuncture helps the condition.

CFS is characterized by debilitating fatigue, plus flu-like symptoms such as sore throat, swollen lymph glands, fever, headaches and muscle pain. While a Western medicine approach would likely include medications for the problem, a Chinese medicine and Acupuncture approach would be quite different.

“A typical diagnosis for CFS would involve kidney-adrenal exhaustion, spleen-stomach digestion deficiency, liver stagnation and blockage,” says Dr. Maoshing Ni, a Doctor of Oriental Medicine who’s used Acupuncture in his treatments since 1985. Mainly, I think we’re looking at the over-taxation of one’s vital energy resources. Treatment with Chinese medicine would involve trying to resolve those issues.” Diet changes and Acupuncture would both be uses.

Now, for those who don’t have access to an acupuncturist, Dr. Ni has several self-help suggestions for persons suffering from fatigue. He suggests 3 separate Acupressure points where a person can do some “self-administered” treatment applying a little bit of pressure for several minutes a day.

Stomach point #36 improves immune function. It is located in the outside of the leg about 3 inches below the bottom of the knee cap. Feel for the outside head of the shin bone and apply steady pressure for about 1 minute, just hard enough to feel a bit of tenderness.

Kidney point #3 fortifies the kidney-adrenal system. This is very important says Dr. Ni as people with CFS have kidney and adrenal systems that are virtually exhausted. The point is located in the inside back of the ankle between the Achilles tendon and the ankle bone. Again, apply pressure for 1 minute.

Large Intestine #4 relieves pain, plus fights bacterial, fungal and microbial problems, too. It’s located in the web of the hand between the thumb and the index finger. To find it, make an “OK” sign and feel for a back of the hand muscle bump. Press there for 1 minute.

“Not everyone has access to Acupuncture, but certainly they have a finger they can use,” Dr. Ni says. “It will stimulate in much the same way as an Acupuncture needle.”

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ACUPRESSURE HELPS STUDENTS STAY MORE WIDE AWAKE IN CLASS!

Throughout the history of education, students have tried all sorts of remedies to stay attentive when a boring professor or lack of proper sleep sends them drifting off in a college class. Drinking coffee, taking commercially available tablets alleged to stop the dozing, or indulging in high-sugar snacks are just a few of them. Now, according to a University of Michigan study, Acupressure may bring new hope to those struggling to stay awake in the classroom.

The study involved teaching students to self-administer Acupressure to a variety of body points on their legs, feet, hands and heads. Some of these points were known to cause more stimulation, others greater relaxation. A total of 39 students in a 3-day On Job/On Campus program took part in the study. The results were published in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*.

“Our findings suggested that Acupressure can change alertness in people who are in classroom settings for a full day which could be very good news for students who have trouble staying alert at school.” This comment comes from the director of the study, Dr. Richard E. Harris, Ph.D., in the Dept. of Internal Medicine and a researcher with the U-M Health System’s Chronic Pain and Fatigue Research Center.

The 39 students were taught to self-apply Acupressure regimens on either 5 stimulation points or 5 relaxation points. Techniques consisted of light tapping with the fingers and massaging with thumbs or forefingers. On day one, the first group self-administered Acupressure to the stimulation points followed by the relaxation points on days 2 and 3. The second group used relaxation points the first day and stimulation points on days 2 and 3. The Acupressure was administered mid-day during the student lunch period. Students rated their level of sleepiness in the morning, afternoon and after class using the Stanford Sleepiness Scale (SSS) for evaluation. (The SSS is a self-measurement tool for assessing sleepiness on an 8-point rating from wide awake to fast asleep.)

In each case, the stimulation group had significantly less fatigue than the other group and this has interesting implications for future studies, said Dr. Harris, who himself is a trained acupuncturist. “The study showed that a stimulation Acupressure regimen leads to a statistically significant reduction in sleepiness compared to an Acupressure treatment that focuses on relaxation,” he said.

“The idea that Acupressure can have effects on human alertness needs more study, including research that can examine the scope of influence Acupressure can have on alertness and fatigue,” said Dr. Harris. That research can have an impact on performance in the classroom and in other areas of life where a high state of alertness is mandatory or desirable.