

Acupressure Eases Stress of Traveling

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In a “perfect storm” of events last year I was set to travel cross-country to make a presentation at a meeting. A family emergency kept me up all night before my trip, and I knew that with the time difference, I would be making my presentation having had minimal sleep for 2 days. By using special acupressure points to reset my body clock, I was able to arrive relaxed and refreshed. My mind was clear and focused, and the meeting went great. ---Cathy Miller, acupressure therapist & instructor

Many of us travel frequently for work, for continuing education, or for vacation. As we travel, we often cross one or several time zones which may disrupt our normal schedules and bodily rhythms. We experience sleep disturbances, fatigue, difficulty with concentration and physical discomfort. By using acupressure self-care techniques, we can decrease or eliminate jetlag and the challenges experienced when traveling across time zones.

Acupressure is an ancient form of bodywork that uses the gentle pressure of a finger or hand to facilitate balance of the energy flows within the body. There are twelve major meridians or energy pathways. Acupoints are the windows into the meridians.

Each of the 12 meridians has a consistent 2-hour period each day when it is the strongest of the 12, and each meridian has one point that functions like a “reset button” for your internal clock. For example, the large intestine meridian is the strongest, or is considered dominant, from 5 a.m. until 7 a.m. daily. If you hold the “reset” point on the large intestine meridian during those hours, you are calibrating your body clock to that time zone (see Time/ Point Locations chart below).

So---to reset your body clock for the time zone of your destination, follow these easy steps.

As you are preparing to board at your departure gate, note the current time at your destination airport. Visualize being at your arrival airport and set your watch to that time.

Select the acupoint that is appropriate for the current time at your arrival airport. (see Time/ Point Locations chart below)

Apply gentle pressure to this point for two minutes as you picture yourself being at that location.

For best results, continue these mini treatments every two hours while you are traveling, and for a few hours once you arrive at your destination.

When you arrive, look or walk outside to become fully acclimated to the present and to the local time.

Try not to think about the time zone of your return destination until you are ready to travel again. Doing so, or saying “it’s really 5 p.m. at home” will make your transition to the new time zone more difficult.

When you are ready to return home or to journey to your next destination, follow these steps again. You will feel more energetic and refreshed when you arrive.

Time/ Point Locations:

5 a.m. to 7 a.m.: (LI1) On the index finger, at the base of the radial side of the nail bed (see picture)

7 a.m. to 9 a.m.: (ST36) On the lower leg, just below the head of the tibia, one thumb-width lateral from midline (see picture)

9 a.m. to 11 a.m.: (SP3) On the medial arch of the foot, proximal to the joint connecting the big toe to the foot (see picture)

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.: (HT8) On the palm of the hand, where the tip of the little finger rests when making a loose fist (see picture)

1 p.m. to 3 p.m.: (SI5) On the ulnar end of the wrist crease distal to the ulna (see picture)

3 p.m. to 5 p.m.: (BL66) On the lateral side of the foot, proximal to the joint connecting the little toe to the foot (see picture)

5 p.m. to 7 p.m.: (KI10) On the medial side of the leg, just above the end of the popliteal crease (see picture)

7 p.m. to 9 p.m.: (PC8) At the center of the palm, where the tip of the 3rd finger rests when making a loose fist (see picture)

9 p.m. to 11 p.m.: (TW6) On top of the forearm, 3 thumb-widths proximal to the wrist, between the bones (see picture)

11 p.m. to 1 a.m.: (GB41) On top of the foot, between the 4th and 5th toes, where the bones meet (see picture)

1 a.m. to 3 a.m.: (LV1) On the big toe, at the base of the lateral side of the nail bed (see picture)

3 a.m. to 5 a.m.: (LU8) On the forearm, one thumb-width proximal to the radial aspect of the wrist crease (see picture)

About the Authors

Susan Popiel RN, BSN, CST graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill and has served as a nurse for over 25 years. Her interest in natural, integrative healthcare led her to study Clinical Acupressure, Process Acupressure, Craniosacral Therapy, Zero Balancing, Insight Dialogue Meditation, guided imagery and journaling. She holds certification in Clinical Acupressure and Craniosacral Therapy and teaches the Acupressure Seva Stress Release Protocol Course. Susan has a private practice in Pisgah Forest, N.C.

Cathy Miller MM, LMT, ABT is an acupressure therapist, licensed massage therapist and Diplomate of Asian Bodywork Therapy (NCCAOM). She sees clients at Crossings: a center for the healing traditions in Silver Spring, Md., and is an affiliated practitioner.

