

K
KEATS

HEALING WISDOM

Healing *with* Acupressure



HELEN SAUL

Healing *with* Acupressure

HELEN SAUL

Keats Publishing

Chicago New York San Francisco Lisbon London Madrid Mexico City
Milan New Delhi San Juan Seoul Singapore Sydney Toronto

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Saul, Helen.

Healing with acupressure / Helen Saul.

p. cm. — (Healing Wisdom)

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-658-01239-8 (alk. paper)

1. Acupressure. I. Title. II. Series.

RM723.A27 S284 2002

615.8'22—dc21

2001047705

Keats Publishing



A Division of The McGraw-Hill Companies

Copyright © 2002 by Helen Saul. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. Except as permitted under the United States Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 DOC/DOC 0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 0-658-01239-8

This book was set in Bembo by Laurie Young

Printed and bound by R. R. Donnelley—Crawfordsville

Cover and interior design by Laurie Young

Cover illustration © Shelagh Armstrong

McGraw-Hill books are available at special quantity discounts to use as premiums and sales promotions, or for use in corporate training programs. For more information, please write to the Director of Special Sales, Professional Publishing, McGraw-Hill, Two Penn Plaza, New York, NY 10121-2298. Or contact your local bookstore.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people unknowingly contributed to this book. All have been my teachers at one time or another over the last thirty-five years, and many have been major contributors to the development of body work in all of its various forms, or of acupressure.

Hildegard Elsberg went to India in the 1950s and brought back the breathing techniques of the yoga masters; she, along with Charlotte Selver, were pioneers in bringing sensory awareness and breath work to America. Both were my teachers and contributed enormously to my learning and understanding of my own body.

Dr. Isabel Biddle, D.O., and Dr. Muriel Chapman, D.O., kept traditional osteopathy alive when it was almost a lost art. Both taught me that subtle touch can heal.

Dr. Jonathon Shore, M.D., D.H.T., homeopathic physician and friend, was the first person to use acupuncture on me—and it worked!

Acknowledgments

Dr. Richard Mauss, M.D., and Dr. Brugh Joy, M.D., gave up traditional Western medicine to train so many, myself included, in the art of developing inner healing energy through meditation, and the use of inner vision to diagnose and treat. They did this at a time when “objective” and “scientific” methods dominated the medical world in the United States.

Michael Reed Gach, Ph.D., founded the Acupressure Institute in Berkeley, California, and Alice Hiatt, R.N., remains a core faculty member. Both are great students of Traditional Chinese Medicine and how it can bring healing through touch. They have contributed immeasurably to the professionalization of acupressure in the West.

xii
☞ I am particularly indebted to Alice, a psychiatric nurse, who became my friend and gave so generously of her time and knowledge, helping to guide me into the world of hands-on body therapy from the world of psychotherapy.

A special acknowledgement goes to Dorothea Romankiw, the now retired founder/director of St. George Homes in Berkeley. She was a great pioneer in the nonmedical treatment of profound and chronic schizophrenia. She firmly believed that a holistic approach must be used at all times. To this end, she brought to St. George some of the most talented and experienced alternative therapists from around the world. I served as the senior psychotherapist during these years. Thus began my professional journey into the world of body energy, body work, and eventually Traditional Chinese Medicine and acupressure.

Thanks go to Chokorda Gede Rae and Dr. Wyan Weda, my two teachers in Bali, Indonesia, steeped in traditional Balinese

Acknowledgments

healing, each of whom has been enormously generous in giving me their time and knowledge.

And last, but certainly not least, thanks to my longtime friend, Frena Gray-Davidson, who believed in what I was doing when I first said I could write a book on acupressure, and who served as a great guide through the labyrinth of making a book happen. She has demonstrated repeatedly in her own books that writing is both an art and hard work.



INTRODUCTION

Many people in North America have heard of acupressure, but few actually practice it. Often, it will be taught in a single course or two within the context of a larger training program in general massage or holistic body work, leading to certification as a massage practitioner or therapist. Because of this approach to training, few body and massage therapists have studied acupressure in depth, though many of them use some of the points of acupressure in their practice. The fundamental obstacle they have to a deeper, fuller understanding is that acupressure is essentially a branch of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and is thus very different from what we know as massage.

Anyone can practice acupressure. You can use it on yourself and on others. As a self-help technique, it has been proved extremely effective for a variety of bodily discomforts and conditions. Used on others, acupressure can relieve pain; stop excessive

bleeding; relieve the congestion of the common cold; alleviate the symptoms of arthritis, backache, slipped disk, and sprains; and abate the throbbing of a headache. Sore muscles and general tension can be relieved quickly and safely. Acupressure points have been used by women for centuries to improve their complexion and to become more beautiful. And acupressure can be used simply to promote better health in general.

There are two main reasons why fewer people practice acupressure. The first is that acupressure is rarely taught in the West. The second is that it requires an understanding of the basis of TCM, which may explain why it is not often taught in the West. For those interested in going beyond the simple introductory courses given with massage accreditation, the study of acupressure is preceded by a complex theoretical introduction of Chinese medical theory. Those who want to truly understand acupressure are often intimidated because the body of knowledge may seem far too vast and difficult to grasp. Fortunately, this is not the case.

This aim of this book is to further your understanding of the principles of acupressure—not through an extensive study of the related theories, but through a hands-on approach to its application.

There are relatively few books about acupressure in English. A few have been translated from Chinese (sometimes poorly) or from Japanese. Those in English are generally written by American or British authors who have taken a body of knowledge from TCM, as practiced in Japan, Korea, China, and other places in Asia and formulated it into the separate discipline we know as acupressure. They are they ones who introduced the term to the West. The practice of this new-to-the-West discipline

has been channeled into various schools of acupressure, each with its own master teacher and followers. Various styles—ranging from very traditional Chinese massage or Japanese shiatsu to entirely new forms not seen in China—have emerged. The few books on acupressure reflect these variations in tradition and style. Most acupressurists (or acupressure therapists, as they are sometimes called) rely heavily on acupuncture books for their understanding of the function of the meridians and the meridian points central to the practice of acupressure.

Because of the very close relationship between acupuncture and acupressure, the few books on acupressure are often overly complicated and filled with Chinese terms, names, and theories. Others are so simplistic and provide no understanding or theoretical basis for the practice. These may consist merely of instructions to press such and such a point for this or that condition.

xvii



In this book, we'll attempt to walk you down a middle path. While a certain amount of terminology and theory is necessary to begin to comprehend the world of Chinese medical thought and practice, we'll emphasize learning through practice. The primary approach will be on hands-on learning, experience, and the application of a few fundamental principles.

This is the same approach used by many teachers of t'ai chi or chi gung. Some of the best instructors do not give any theory whatsoever to students until they have followed the movements daily, for weeks or even months. Eventually, once the students have found a new relationship with their own body through doing, the theory is introduced. Out of this experience the teacher can then tell the students about the movements and their significance without having to resort to intellectual explanations.

In my case, over many, many years I learned several different forms of body work, breathing practices, and structured disciplines of exercise by this hands-on method. Although I have studied the theory to a considerable extent and read a large number of books on Chinese medicine, it has been my practice on others and my experience of acupressure itself that most contributed to my understanding of it.

Theory alone does not begin to teach any single style of acupressure, nor does it offer a detailed knowledge of specifics or even provide an in-depth understanding of the underlying principles. However, using exercises as a basis for learning will provide a glimpse into the vast world of TCM. This will introduce the basics so that anyone can begin to practice acupressure, in an effective manner, even casually.

The charts will not be as detailed as those found in books on acupuncture. More detailed charts can be obtained elsewhere. By simplifying, I hope to not overwhelm the reader with what is essentially an extremely detailed and complex body of knowledge.

The annotated bibliography will serve as a guide for those who wish to pursue the study of acupressure and TCM. A list of training schools, associations, and sources of supplies and additional information is also included.

So, prepare yourself for a working study of the fascinating world of acupressure, a journey in which your hands and your sensitivities are at least as important as your mind and understanding.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	xi
Introduction	xv

PART I

THE WHOLE PERSON

1

The Traditional Chinese View of the Human Body	3
Eastern and Western Approaches	5

2

The Energy of Our Bodies	11
Chi	12
Meridians	15
Yin and Yang Chi	17
Five Element Theory	19

3

Traditional Methods of Enhancing Life Energy	23
Causes of Imbalance	24
Disciplines Within Chinese Medicine	26

Contents

PART II

EXPERIENCING OUR PHYSICAL BEINGS

4

Sensing Our Bodies 37

Sensory Awareness Exercises 38

The Remaining Essential Exercises 46

5

Finding Our Energy Centers 53

Becoming Aware of Energy 54

Hara Breathing 58

vi



6

Locating Channels of Energy 63

Meridians and Anatomy 64

Main Yin Meridians 68

Main Yang Meridians 81

PART III

USING YOUR HANDS IN ACUPRESSURE

7

Developing Sensitivity 103

Meridians and Sore Points 104

Sensitivity Exercises 109

Feeling the Points 112

8		
Knowing What to Do		115
Techniques		116
Doing Acupressure on Others		127
Basic Acupressure Guidelines		139
9		
Finding Key Points		143
Important Points		146
The Five Controlling Points		154
The Yu Points		155
PART IV		
ACUPRESSURE FOR SPECIFIC CONDITIONS		
10		
Acupressure for Relaxation and Rejuvenation		161
Reviewing the Meridians		162
Relieving Fatigue		163
Releasing the Breath		165
Releasing the Lower Back		166
Relaxing the Legs and Feet		167
Tonifying the Inner Organs		167
Relaxing the Arms and Hands		168
Releasing the Upper Back and Shoulders		169
Balancing and Promoting Harmony		170

11

Acupressure for Muscle and Joint Problems	171
Lumbar Strain and Pain	172
General Back Pain and Tension	174
Stiff Neck	175
Stiff and Sore Shoulders	176
Writer's Cramp and Sore Wrists	177
Sore Arm Muscles	178
Sore Leg Muscles	179
Arthritis and Rheumatism	180

12

viii	Acupressure for Common Complaints	183
☞	Eye Tension	185
	Sinus Congestion	189
	Insomnia	190
	Hangover	191
	Constipation	192
	Fatigue	193
	Facial Wrinkles	195

13

Acupressure for First Aid	197
Hemorrhaging	198
Convulsions	198
Shock	198
Difficult Childbirth	199

Contents

14	
Using Moxa for Self Help	201
How to Use Moxa	203
Moxabustion to Treat Specific Areas	205
Conclusion	209
Resources	213
Bibliography	217
Index	223



PART I

THE WHOLE PERSON

