



Acupressure

▷ **What is it?** Acupressure is a traditional Chinese medicine technique which has its roots in acupuncture. Unlike that therapy though,

acupressure doesn't use fine needles, but lightly applied pressure from the hand, elbow or devices such as cotton-covered pads. Acupressure is all about pinpointing problem areas and focusing intensely on them until the knots, tension and energy blocks fade away, making it the perfect treatment for emotional as well as physical pain. An acupressurist works with the same points used in acupuncture – called acupoints – loosening and stimulating them to enable healing without the use of manipulation or deep pressure. It's been shown to achieve great results for acute conditions and chronic pain because it kickstarts the body's own ability to cure itself. But acupressure is also a powerful complementary therapy, and can be used regularly to help prevent illness and give a sense of wellbeing – it's often recommended for people going through traumatic times, such as relationship break-ups, as it can help with disrupted sleeping patterns and can quieten a restless mind.

▷ **What is it good for?** All manner of stress-related problems can be helped by acupressure, including fatigue and lethargy, indigestion, insomnia, allergies, eye strain and irritability. Travel a lot? Try acupressure for motion sickness and upset

stomach, jetlag and dizziness, while it can also relieve PMT, circulatory problems, nausea and loss of appetite. Most importantly, acupressure must always be done by a qualified practitioner, as Clive Teal from The Institute for Complementary and Natural Medicine explains: "Acupressure is about the diagnosis of problems so it's essential to have a therapist who's an expert. Put yourself in the hands of a professional and you'll get a treatment completely custom-made for you."

▷ **Best spa for acupressure:** The glorious Riviera Maya region of Mexico is where you'll find the Aventura Spa Palace, an adults-only, luxury resort built around an extravagant spa, complete with everything from tennis, diving and watersports to yoga huts, meditation pools and waterfalls. The spa's treatments all focus on "purifying, restoring, and revitalising the senses", but the stand-out is the Face, Head and Shoulder Acupressure massage, a therapeutic finger pressure massage on the key energy-balancing points of the face, neck, head and shoulders. Spa-day packages start from £150: the hotel has several all-inclusive packages (not to mention double Jacuzzis in each room). *T: +52 984 875 1100. www.palaceresorts.com*

▷ **Alternative spa:** Acupressure forms the basis of the fatigue-busting Shiroabhyanga Head Massage at the Ayush Wellness Spa at the Hotel de France in Jersey. Lasting an hour the massage focuses on the head, neck, and shoulders, using Ayurvedic oils to really get to the core of tiredness and tension. The massage costs from £65, while The Retreat full-day package is £385. *T: 01534 614172. www.ayushspa.com* >

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