

Acupressure and Self-Health Care

As interest in self-care and health without drugs increases, acupressure stands out as a system of health care which offers the public a simple set of self-care tools that can be used on oneself and with family and friends. Acupressure, originally an Oriental finger pressure art, is in a unique position in that its roots are in antiquity and its theory and practice are applicable today and growing in popularity. It provides an important means of reducing the stress of our day and the physical symptoms which often accompany it.

Acupressure is the generic term used for the art of applying finger pressure to specific points on the body to balance and regulate the flow of body energy. The points are called acu-points and there are about 365 on the body. Acu-points are about the size of a penny although their apex may be smaller than that. The electrical resistance at these points has been measured by the Japanese to be 1/100 that of the surrounding area. This means acu-points conduct electricity more easily than the surrounding skin. Finger pressure is applied to the points systematically to release accumulated tension. As the tension is released, it facilitates a feeling of relaxation and well being and often relieves physical symptoms such as headaches, neck, shoulder and back tension, menstrual tension, etc.

Acupressure and acupuncture use the same points and are both based on traditional Chinese medicine. Briefly, from the Western standpoint, it is believed that

by Kamala Kielas

the stimulation of acu-points is connected with the release of endorphins in the body. Endorphins are opium-like substances and function in pain control. A number of gate theories have been presented to explain the mechanisms of pain control. Gates are sights in the nervous system where modification of pain signals can occur when a competing signal is introduced. The competing signal blocks the gate, so to speak, so that the pain impulse cannot go thru to the brain. This results in changes in pain perception. The reader is referred to the article entitled "Acupuncture—Cultural Perspectives" by R. Prasaad Steiner, M.D. This article appeared in the October 1983 volume of *Post-Graduate Medicine*. It discusses this healing modality from both an Eastern and Western perspective and elaborates on the information given here.

Jin Shin Do is a specific type of acupressure which offers the lay person a set of self-care tools. Beyond this it offers the professional therapist an extremely effective method for releasing physical and psychological tension.

For the past five years Jin Shin Do has been used regularly in the public school system in Santa Cruz, CA with physically and mentally handicapped children through Project PRES (Physical Response Education Systems). PRES reports that children re-

ceiving acupressure sessions showed unexpected improvement in all learning domains in addition to making the expected psychomotor gains.

In an article in *Thrust*, a journal of the Association of California School Administrators, it is reported that staff who learned and practiced acupressure on themselves and each other reported relief from migraine headaches, chronic allergy problems, neck and back tension as well as a general feeling of health and well being, and an increased ability to concentrate and handle stress.

I will offer classes in Self-Care Acupressure this summer. I am an authorized Jin Shin Do practitioner and teacher. Specialty classes are also taught. These classes are designed to meet the needs of a specific group, e.g. athletes, counselors, beauticians, hospice volunteers. If you are interested in more information concerning these classes, or belong to a group that may like to have a specialty class designed for it, contact me at Integrative Therapies, 33 E 20th, Eugene, 683-4483.

Summer classes include:
Headaches, Neck and Shoulder Tension, Thursday, June 20, 6:30-9:30 pm, \$12.

Back Tension, Low Back Pain, Tuesday, July 2, 7-9 pm, \$10.

Menstrual Cramps and Related Back Tension, Tuesday, July 23, 7-9 pm, \$10.

Foot and Hand Massage with Acu-Points, Tuesday, August 6, 6:30-9:30 pm, \$12. Bring a towel and oil.

ARTS/CRAFTS

Beginning Crochet! Six 2-hr. classes, private or bring a friend. Call 345-6096 for more information.

Open Life Drawing: Tuesdays/Thursdays, 6:30-9:30 pm, 275 Lawrence Hall, UO. \$1.50. Terry, 683-4673.

1985 Lane County Talent Show. Performer-registration ends July 5. Details, 343-7242.

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