

6. STRESS RELIEF -- THE ORIENTAL METHOD

What does a tense and tired Japanese executive do after a long, busy day at the office? If he's become Americanized, he might knock back a couple of glasses of scotch or saki to relax himself.

But if he's remained true to his roots, he's more likely to reach for a special spot on either arm or leg and massage it briefly in an unusual way. Or if he's had a particularly harrowing day, he might even stop at his favorite shiatsu parlor for a complete Japanese style rub-down.

Shiatsu is one of many strictly-Oriental stress-management techniques that most Japanese are taught from childhood. It combines massage with acupuncture -- but without the needles. Instead, the fingertips are used to perform acupressure.

To the uninitiated, its benefits are nothing short of miraculous. Imagine: relieving a headache or backache in ten seconds flat ... unkinking tense shoulders in less than a minute ... calming a nervous stomach in a matter of moments -- using nothing but the touch of a finger! Not only are such results typical for shiatsu, if they didn't occur, our executive would probably find himself another shiatsu parlor very soon.

Unfortunately, shiatsu parlors are hard to find outside of Japan. On the other hand, it is quite possible to apply many of its principles to oneself and receive the identical benefits, as many Americans are now doing. And surprisingly, learning the technique takes only a few minutes of reading and practice.

The self-applied version is called "G-Jo" (Gee-joh). This abbreviated form of shiatsu relies on "triggering" (deeply massaging) only a handful of the body's more than 1200 known acupuncture/acupressure points. For example, a complete stress-relief self-treatment session calls for triggering just 20 G-Jo acupressure points for a few seconds each. While this program (*Relieve Stress with Acugenics*, available on our website www.g-jo.com) takes less than five minutes to perform, its effects are far more relaxing than any tranquilizer or cocktail.

And relieving a particular symptom -- such as a headache or tense, aching lower back -- is even easier. For in that case, only one (or at the most, several) of these tiny G-Jo points are triggered for the necessary 10 to 15 seconds. Relief follows immediately.

For example, to relieve a headache: find G-Jo point number 13 by placing the right hand so the palm faces the floor. Now put your fingers out straight, side by side, and squeeze your thumb tightly against your index or pointer finger. You should see a small, fleshy mound pop up on the back of the right hand between the thumb and index finger.

Now place the tip -- not the pad or fleshy part -- of the left thumb (or if you have a long thumb nail, the bent knuckle of the left index finger or even the eraser tip of a pencil) on top of that mound. Keeping the left thumb tip in place, relax the right hand and begin pressing as deeply as you can in the webbed or fleshy area that is formed between the thumb and pointer finger.

Press deeply until you feel a tender "ouch" point. This will feel like a toothache or pinched nerve when you contact it -- the more it hurts the better it is likely to be for your kind of headache.

Once you locate the spot, do step two of this very easy three-step process: "trigger" the point deeply, in a digging or goading kind of fingertip massage. Do this for 15 or 20 seconds on the right hand, then stop and duplicate the find-and-trigger technique on the back of the left hand

for another 15 or 20 seconds.

If this is the best point for your type of headache, several things should occur. First, you should get an "acupressure reaction," which is a feeling of warmth, perspiration, light-headedness or similar response as you trigger the point. This should happen as you stimulate the points on both hands, if it is a particularly good point. Then you should feel a sense of relaxation or a mild "glowing" feeling ... and, of course, relief of your headache.

To relieve a backache: find G-Jo point number 5 by first seating yourself in a comfortable chair, then reaching down behind the bony bulge of the outer right ankle with the tip of your right thumb. Press deeply in the soft hollow or depression located between that bony bulge -- that doctors call the lateral malleolus -- and the Achilles tendon (the hamstring tendon that runs up the back of the foot and leg). Press deeply -- as deeply as you can -- until you feel the tender point.

Once located, trigger the spot in the deep, digging or goading kind of massage and expect an acupressure reaction. If this does not occur, it usually means you're not quite on the G-Jo point, or that this point is not particularly beneficial for your kind of backache. But nearly always, G-Jo point number 5 will both produce the reaction and bring some kind of relief.

Trigger the spot deeply for 15 or 20 seconds; then stop and reach for the identical point behind the left outer ankle. Again, find and trigger that point -- it may be more or less tender than the right side (often the left side is more tender on a man and the right side is more tender on a woman) -- then test your backache. If it isn't quite gone, simply trigger the points for another few seconds and test again.

There are several people who should normally avoid the use of G-Jo (except in an emergency). These include chronic heart sufferers, especially those who wear pacemakers or other mechanical energy regulators and people who take regular, daily medications (except vitamins or other mild preventive" medicines). Pregnant women should also avoid the use of G-Jo especially after the first trimester.

There are nearly 200 G-Jo acupressure points, and each one may have as many as three or four dozen "self-health" uses. It is said that a G-Jo point exists to relieve most problems in any part of the body. More complete instructions -- along with detailed illustrations of all the G-Jo acupressure points and their many uses are found in our *Master of G-Jo Acupressure Home-Study Certification Program* from our website, **www.g-jo.com**).