

Patient Help Sheet

Stress and Focus

Here are some tips that you can use to help balance and support your health during this time. Please feel free to call me if you have further questions or concerns.

"Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live." – Jim Rohn

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Beating Stress and Staying on Task

The dictionary defines stress in multiple ways, but only one matters when we discuss how stress affects our physical bodies. Stress is defined as a physical, chemical or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Stress actually does have a function in our bodies. Stress is the body's way of signaling for help or a break in the routine. If we don't listen to these signals, we can develop imbalances in our bodies, which can then lead to illnesses.

Cortisol is the hormone most closely related to stress. Cortisol is a big component of the "fight or flight" response we feel when we are scared or threatened. In small bursts, cortisol is helpful. However, when stress becomes chronic, then the cortisol levels become elevated. This puts the body in a constant state of being on edge, eventually causing insomnia, depression, anxiety, digestive issues and even mental illness.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) provides many ways of combating stress and keeping our minds focused. Here are just a few examples of how this ancient medical system can help.

Acupuncture for Stress

Acupuncture acts like physical therapy for the nervous system. Tiny needles retrain the nervous system and brain to behave as it should normally. For the nervous system to act and respond accordingly, cortisol has to be at normal levels and only used when a true "fight or flight" situation occurs. Studies show acupuncture does this.

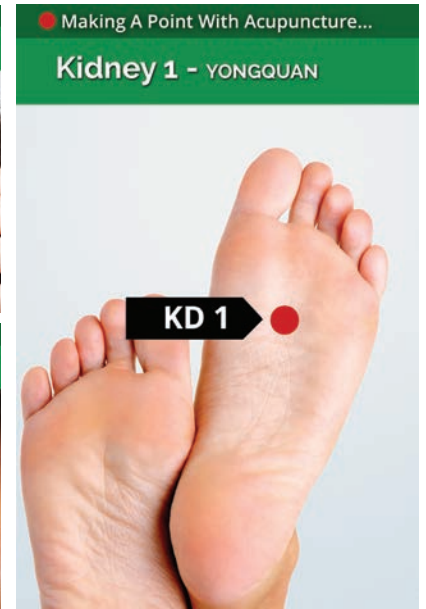
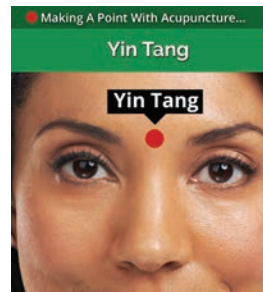
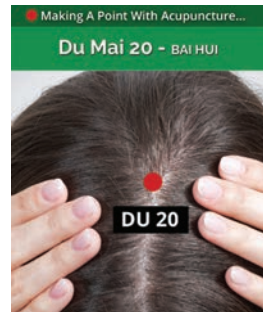
Acupuncture reduces stress by keeping the heart rate normal. When the body is stressed, the heart tends to pump faster, and in some cases, a person may even develop heart palpitations. Our heart rate is closely connected to our vagus nerve. If the vagus nerve is stimulated, so too will the heart rate. There are specific acupressure points on the arms and hands that calm the vagus nerve and the heart.

Acupuncture Points for Stress and Focus

Yin Tang Yin Tang is located directly between the inner edges of the eyebrows. It is a reflex point of the pituitary gland. Yin Tang calms the mind and relaxes the body by helping control hormone secretions.

Kidney 1 Kidney 1 is located on the bottom of the foot, at the junction of the anterior one third and posterior two thirds of the line connecting the base of the second and third toes and the heel. Kidney 1 can sedate and calm the mind, while also regulating blood flow to the upper part of the body, aka the brain.

Du 20 This point is located on the top of the head, midway between the apexes of both ears. Du 20 has been noted to improve mental clarity and awareness, while also enhancing memory.



Chinese Herbal Formulas for Stress and Focus

Combinations of herbs, known as formulas are used frequently in TCM. An herbal formula known as Bu Nao Wan is frequently prescribed for people who have memory problems related to weakness in the kidney system of TCM. Several of the herbs in this formula have been used for centuries to calm the mind and improve focus.

Xiao Yao San is another popular TCM formula that is used frequently to address stress. This formula is known as "Free and Easy Wanderer" because it helps remove any stagnation in the energetic pathways that can lead to stress and difficulty focusing or staying on task.

Nutrition for Stress and Focus

Proper nutrition is vital for everyone. But when it comes to stress and focus, nutrition for the kidneys is crucial. The kidneys are the source of our vital essence and if damaged, our health will suffer. Foods like black beans, kidney beans, asparagus, plums, blueberries and blackberries are all beneficial for strengthening the kidneys.

As you can see, TCM is a great way to deal with stress. If you are having difficulties dealing with stress, contact me to see what we can do to get you back on track.

Erin Kumpf Acupuncture & Herbs
212 Palisade Ave #1R
Jersey City, NJ 07306
201-338-0552
www.erinkumpf.com