

How Does Acupressure Work?

Let's take a look at how acupressure works.

Acupressure has been around for thousands of years. For me, when I hear people asking does acupressure or acupuncture actually work really makes me smile. Do you really think that people would be using these forms of treatments for thousands of years if they didn't?

I also do a lot of acupuncture on animals and both the owners of the pets and I have seen fabulous results time and time again. I like doing animal acupuncture because there is no placebo effect involved. Animals do not know what is going so for those who say 'acupuncture is nothing more than a placebo-all in the mind', this removes any placebo when treating pets/animals.(apart from the thousands and thousands of studies showing the efficacy of acupressure/acupuncture.

The points on the body that we are going to stimulate are commonly known as acupoints. If we stimulate the acupoints with pressure we are doing acu-pressure(pressure on the acupoints) and likewise if we stimulate the points by inserting needles into them we are doing acu-puncture.

In Traditional Chinese Medical theory, there are interconnecting channels of energy called meridians and along those meridians are acupoints. The channels are connected through the muscular tissues and joints and also connect to internal organs which is why we can see an effect on our organs and systems of our body too. The Chinese did not know about endorphins being released so their theory was, when a person was in pain, the energy that should be flowing through the meridians known as chi(or Ki) gets stuck thus producing pain. There is a Chinese saying that says 'where there is free flow of chi there is no pain but when the chi gets stuck it produces pain'.

Therefore what they would do was to stimulate both local points which are points that are close to the painful area and also distal points. This is why you may see people getting their points on their hand stimulated for headaches.

But what do we know from a Western Medical perspective?

Not a lot is really known but we do know that by stimulating these points we

release endorphins. Endorphins, you may have heard of. These are the neurochemicals that relieve pain. When the endorphins are released, the person's pain is not only blocked but also the flow of blood and oxygen to the area that affected is also increased. When this happens, a healing response begins.

Acupressure is not only good for alleviating pain but it also rebalances the body helping to create what is known as homeostasis. This can help the body heal and even increase the immune system which in turn makes the person's defenses stronger .

Also, of course by pressing on the soft tissue you soften the tissue around the area which decreases tissue tension and allows better nutrient and blood flow to that area.