

Acupuncture for Migraines & Headaches

by Shoshanna Katzman



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Acupuncture is an effective treatment for migraine and headache sufferers. Chinese medicine teaches us that they are due to an imbalance between yin and yang energies. Their occurrence tends to be from an excessive amount of yang energy which makes the head feel

like it is bursting. Although headaches that occur later in the day are more commonly due to deficiency of qi and blood, where one might feel heavy headed and like something is stuck. And those that cover the entire head and feel like a deep ache most often stem from kidney deficiency.

Interestingly, the head is where yang energy collects and is concentrated. In fact, all yang energetic meridian pathways meet at the head. When yang energy ascends properly to the head, a person is able to think clearly and experience optimal hearing, vision, taste and sense of smell. The gall bladder meridian contains the most points on the head of all pathways. The kidney organ system rules the head, including the brain. As such, an acupuncturist chooses acupoints along these meridians to open flow within the

head to treat the root cause of a headache or migraine.

Internal causes arise from something already existing within the body. For example, a Chinese medicine diagnosis known as “liver yang rising” is yang pushing upward and collecting in the head. In this case, pain is predominantly on one side of the head or at the temples.

External causes are derived from the environment and weather including sudden changes in temperature or conditions the body can't adjust to quick enough. A headache or migraine might also be set off by getting hit with external wind while driving in a convertible, enjoying a boat ride or simply putting the window down while driving down the road.

Here are some helpful suggestions:

- When extreme fatigue is present, avoid overworking, make special time to rest and relax, eliminate caffeine and other stimulants from the diet and refrain from sexual activity until feeling more energized.
- When liver yang is rising and heat symptoms present themselves, avoid spicy and greasy foods and be conscientious about reducing stress.
- When blood or qi is deficient, incorporate more whole grains, beans, nuts, dark green leafy vegetables and eat mostly cooked foods and warming drinks.
- When an emotional component exists, sort things out by taking long walks, journaling, talking things out with loved ones or try talk therapy with a psychotherapist.

Daily Centering Exercise

Sit up straight on a comfortable chair with soles of feet resting on the floor and palms on your belly. Take a few deep breaths and look within. Then place your fingertips on your temples and gently massage them in circles six times in one direction and six times in the opposite direction. When you are ready, place your palms on your belly and take a few deep breaths once again. Then stand up and shake yourself off and get on with the rest of your day.

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