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— HAVE YOU TRIED —

SEATED ACUPRESSURE MASSAGE

A SHORT BUT INVIGORATING TREATMENT THAT CAN HELP TO TACKLE GENERAL ACHES AND PAINS THROUGH RESTORING THE BALANCE OF QI

Words: Karen Young

Acupressure, which is the basis of a seated acupressure massage, can be traced back thousands of years to the ancient practices of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM).

Often referred to as ‘acupuncture without the needles’, acupressure is based on the principle that vital energy (*qi*) runs throughout the body, along channels called meridians. According to TCM, if the flow of *qi* gets disrupted or blocked, this can cause disease within the mind, body and spirit, with the health of all three considered to be intrinsically linked. Acupressure aims to restore the balance of *qi*, with the therapist applying pressure to specific ‘acupoints’ along the meridians, using their fingers, thumbs, elbows and other parts of their hands and arms.

The development of seated acupressure or ‘on-site’ massage is largely credited to American therapist, David Palmer. He created a tailor-made routine in the early 1980s when treating employees working in Silicon Valley, the technology hub of the United States. Realising its full potential in the corporate world, he went on to design a portable ergonomic chair to enhance the treatment and ensure his clients were as comfortable as possible.

“Today, people from all walks of life can enjoy a seated acupressure massage,” explains Mary Dagleish, Vice President of the Federation of Holistic Therapists, and a practitioner of seated acupressure massage. “It involves the therapist using a variety of techniques, such as pressing, rubbing, stretching, kneading, squeezing and rotations. Usually the whole body will be treated, from head to foot, but



more attention is usually paid to the neck, shoulders, back and arms, as these are areas where most of us store a lot of muscular tension.”

“One of the really nice features of this treatment is its portability,” Mary continues. “Seated acupressure is still very popular in the workplace, and because it doesn’t involve removing clothing or applying any massage oils or creams, it’s now enjoyed in a wide range of other locations as well – from airport lounges and conference centres to local fairs and events.”

Sessions last from 10 to 30 minutes and cost between £10 to £60, depending on the length of treatment, location and therapist. Many clients find the treatment invigorating and uplifting, but do bear in mind that it may not be suitable for everyone, such as those who have experienced a recent neck injury or similar trauma. @

The Federation of Holistic Therapists (www.fht.org.uk) is the UK and Ireland’s leading professional association for complementary, holistic beauty and sports therapists.

Five benefits of seated acupressure massage

1 Lower back pain is a common and often painful complaint. Guidelines produced by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommend massage, alongside exercise, as a way of managing this.

2 For those who sit in the same position for prolonged periods, seated acupressure massage can help to relieve muscular aches and improve posture.

3 If you happen to have sensitive skin, this type of massage could be ideal for you as it doesn’t involve applying any oils or products.

4 Tension-type headaches can strike when muscles in the neck and scalp become tense or contract. Seated acupressure targets and helps to relax muscles in these areas.

5 Time poor? This type of massage takes as little as 10 minutes, so you can enjoy an effective, stress-busting treatment without having to keep an eye on the clock.

BEFORE YOU GO
Seated acupressure massage should be used alongside standard medical care and not as an alternative. Always consult your GP or other health professional for medical attention and advice.