



TRY *it*

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Healing hands

Need a stress reliever? Or better yet, a natural one? It's nothing but a touch away thanks to acupressure. "Like many therapies, acupressure has evolved over time, but its roots can be traced back thousands of years to the ancient practices of traditional Chinese medicine," Mary Dalgleish, vice president of the Federation of Holistic Therapists (fht.org.uk) tells us. "It aims to restore the balance of vital energy known as qi, by a therapist applying pressure to specific parts of the body using their fingers, thumbs and elbows. Often referred to as acupuncture without needles, acupressure is based on the principle that if qi is free-flowing through the body then all is well, but, if it becomes blocked or imbalanced, ill health may follow." In other words, acupressure seeks to balance the body's channels of energy and regulate opposing forces of yin (negative energy) and yang (positive energy) to treat both the body and mind. To gain maximum benefit, it's always best to see a therapist who is qualified and insured to practise acupressure, but here Mary recommends some techniques that you can try at home to help with everyday niggles.

- **The hand valley point:** This can be found in the flesh of the web between your thumb and index finger. Apply firm pressure, using your thumb and index finger of your opposite hand, for four to six seconds. It's important to note that this acupoint should never be used during pregnancy.

This helps to relieve: Stress, headaches, toothache, sinusitis and shoulder or neck pain.

- **The tai chong:** This is located in the hollow between your first and second toes where the bones merge. Using your thumb or forefinger, apply moderate to firm pressure for up to a minute.

This helps to relieve: Stress, irritability, insomnia, digestive and menstrual problems.

