

# STRESS

By Brendan Mobley  
Twelfth Grade Project  
2017-2018

## Disclaimer

The statements in this booklet are not intended to diagnose any health conditions.

If you have any preexisting medical conditions, check with your primary healthcare provider before trying any of the herbal formulas, essential oils, and/or exercises recommended in this booklet.

The acupuncture points in this booklet are intended strictly for use with pressure. The state of California prohibits the use of needles without a valid acupuncture license.

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## What is Health?

Before you read any more of this booklet, I invite you to spend a few minutes on a simple exercise. When you read the word “health,” what comes to mind? What “is” health? Do your best to make a definition, then write it down in the space below.

Do you have the same definition of health as your spouse or sibling? It might not come as a surprise to realize that we all have different ideas of health. Everyone is different, and depending on personal constitution and experiences, different people might think of health in different ways. Some might think of it as a state of the body, others as a state of mind or a feeling. Others might think of it in relation to society, or the well-being of the environment.

I invite you, at least for a moment, to entertain the idea that health is not the same for each person. For example, what is healthy for you might not be healthy for me, and vice versa. This idea leads to several other concepts. One is that healing can be personalized. If everyone has a different healthy, the best method of healing can vary greatly from person to person.

The next idea is that you know your body best. If it is true that your healthy is different from my healthy, how could I assume to know the best way to heal you?

If you walk away from my project with only one takeaway, allow it to be this idea of individualized health.

## What is Stress?

Just as with health, stress means something different to each person. For this project, I define it as:

*The response to a perceived danger or stressor which causes a physiological change in the body.*

This physiological change starts with the release of a hormone cocktail, leading to changes in the body as it prepares to take potentially life-saving action. The changed state is commonly called “fight or flight.” It could also be aptly named the Stress Response. Some of the changes include:

- Heart rate and blood pressure increase
- Pupil dilation
- More blood sent to major muscle groups (skeletal muscles), less to everywhere else
- Blood sugar level increase
- Muscles tense up, energized by adrenaline and glucose
- Relaxing of smooth muscle in order to allow more oxygen into the lungs
- Shutdown of nonessential systems (like digestion and the immune system) to allow more energy (blood, oxygen) for emergency functions
- Brain focuses only on big picture and has trouble focusing on small tasks

Experiencing the stress response means that your body is using the sympathetic nervous system (fight or flight). Normally your body uses the parasympathetic nervous system (homeostasis/ calm).

Stress can be very helpful in small doses, and at the right times. It can give that last push in a marathon, or give energy to finish a paper at 2:00 am. The problems start when a person begins using the sympathetic nervous system too much. It is worth noting that everyone's "too much" is different. In any case, crossing that boundary can lead to many problems, as the stress response is not sustainable to live in.

It is worth noting that imbalances can be prime sources of stress in and of themselves.

Of course, there are many ways to define stress. Try coming up with your own definition in the space below.

## Triggers

Most people experience a generally similar stress reaction. However, the triggers for said stress can vary wildly. Stress triggers can also be called stressors.

Examples of common stressors:

- Feeling of lacking - time, money, love
- Being put on the spot - job interview, speech
- Planning a large or important event
- Being late - deadlines, appointments
- Major life change - move, job, pregnancy
- Frustration - family, work, bureaucracy, technology
- Physical infirmity - illness, aging

Do any of the listed stressors resonate with you?

Being aware of one's stressors is a great first step towards being less stressed.

# General De-Stressing

If you only read one page of this whole booklet, read this one. Every other page is a variation to target a specific variation. Remember that everyone is different, so not all suggestions will work for everyone. Try integrating changes into your life slowly and pay attention to any changes you feel.

## Lifestyle

Avoid stimulants (caffeine, sugar, nicotine, etc.)

Take more naps! See instructions below.

## Herbal Formulations

Chai hu shu gan san, or bupleurum decoction (modified)

Ingredients: bupleurum 10 grams, tangerine peel 10 grams, bitter orange 6 grams, cyperus 6 grams, loveage root 10 grams, white peony root 10 grams, licorice root 6 grams, fresh ginger root 1 slice, red Chinese date (jujube) 3 pieces.

Directions:

Step 1: Place all herbs into a pot with 5 cups of filtered or distilled water.

Step 2: Bring to a boil over medium heat.

Step 3: Lower the flame and simmer for 30 min. Use a timer.

Step 4: Strain tea into a glass container.

Step 5: Add 4½ cups of water to the already cooked herbs and repeat steps 2 and 3.

Step 6: Mix tea from round one and tea from round two.

Doseage: 1 cup, 3x per day before or after meals

Note: This is a base formula for stress relief. We will be modifying it for each imbalance. Keep in mind that this formula is only to treat the imbalance if it is caused by stress. The imbalances mentioned here have many other causes than stress, so use with caution.

## “No Worries” Herbal Tea

Ingredients: 1 teaspoons raw honey, 2 parts Chamomile flowers, 1 part lavender flowers, 1 part valerian flowers, 1 part peppermint leaf, 1 part rose petals, 2 parts lemon-balm herb (optional), 1 part lemongrass (optional), pinch of nutmeg (to taste)

Directions: Combine everything in a glass jar. For one cup of tea, use 1 to 2 teaspoons (from jar) per cup of hot water and steep for 5 minutes.

## “Refuel” bath:

Ingredients: 1 cup Epsom salt, 2-5 drops patchouli essential oil (optional), 3 drops clary sage essential oil, 2 drops eucalyptus essential oil, 3 drops grapefruit or ginger essential oil, rosemary tea (see instructions below).

Rosemary tea: mix 1 cup fresh rosemary, 4 cups water. Bring mix to boil, then simmer for 30 min. Yields 3 cups of product.

Directions: Add essential oils to the epsom salt and mix well. Pour into full warm bath and stir with hand. Soak for 20 to 30 minutes.

#### “Anti-anxiety” back rub:

Ingredients: 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, essential oils-12 drops lavender, 6 drops Ylang Ylang, 4 drops frankincense, 3 drops clary sage.

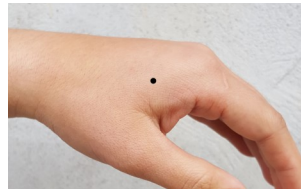
Preparation: add essential oils to vegetable oil. Shake gently to mix well. Warm the oil by placing in hot water bath. Apply to back area in light and gentle strokes.

Essential oils: Clary sage, geranium, lavender, ylang ylang

### Acupressure Points

#### Four Gates

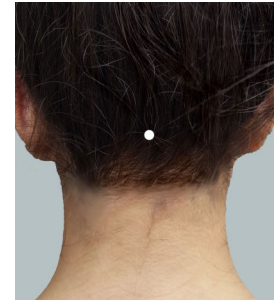
Valley of Harmony (LI 4): between the 1st and 2nd metacarpal bones, in the middle of the 2nd metacarpal bone on the inside of the hand.



Great Rushing (LIV 3): On the top of the foot, in the depression next to the 1st metatarsal space.



Gate of Silence (Du 16): On the back of the neck, one thumb breadth directly above the midpoint of the posterior hair-line, directly below the external occipital protuberance, in the depression between trapezius of both sides.



### Exercises

#### Power Nap

Method 1: lay on your back on a reclined, comfortable surface. Preferably not in bed. Cross one leg over the other, then one arm over the other on your chest. It should feel like laying in a sarcophagus. Make some form of shade to go over your eyes. Set your alarm for 20 minutes and relax.

Method 2: lay on your stomach on a flat surface, preferably not in bed. Place a pillow on the small of your back. Set your alarm for 20 minutes and relax. Careful with method 2 if you have or are prone to neck pain, as it might make it worse.

# Insomnia

For some people, stress makes it hard to fall or stay asleep. This makes sense; the stress response tenses things up and gets the body ready for action, not sleep. Chronic stress can lead to chronic sleeplessness, or insomnia. Insomnia can cause a whole bunch of health issues, like an impaired immune system or adrenal exhaustion. Furthermore, not sleeping makes everything more difficult and causes more stress.

## Questions

Do you also have headaches? Are you suffering from neck pain?

Do you have high blood pressure?

Are you eating late meals? What are you eating?

Do you sleep better when you are less stressed?

## Lifestyle

Try: dimming lights, avoiding electronics, eating lighter meals, exercising near bedtime, not exercising near bedtime, not using stimulants (caffeine, etc.) before bed. Remember; not everything works for everyone, so give each change some time to see if it works for you.

Try turning your head to face away from the east, preferably towards the west.

## Herbal Formulations

Chai hu shu gan san, or bupleurum decoction (modified for insomnia)

Begin with the Chai Hu Shu Gan San found under General De-Stressing then add: ziziphus 15 grams, biota seed 15 grams, lily bulb 15 grams, oyster shell 20 grams, dragon bone 20 grams.

Take first cup at lunch, second late afternoon, third 1 hour before bed.

Epsom salt bath or Epsom salt foot bath

Ziziphus tea, Valerian tea

Lily bulb Congee

Ingredients: 1 cup rice (any kind). 6 cups chicken stock, vegetable stock, or water. ½ cup lily bulb.

Directions:

Step 1: Place the rice in a large strainer or colander and rinse it under cool water. The water running through the rice will usually look milky at first, but will then become clearer. It's fine if there's still some haze in the water.

Step 2: Combine the rice and liquid in the saucepan.

Step 3: Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and partially cover.

Step 4: Continue simmering for about 1½ hours. Stir the congee occasionally during cooking — this will make it more creamy. Add lily bulb after 45 minutes. If the porridge is getting a little stiff, or if you'd like a looser porridge, add more cooking liquid. The congee is ready when the rice is as soft and porridgy as you prefer.

Step 5: Serve warm.

## Acupressure points

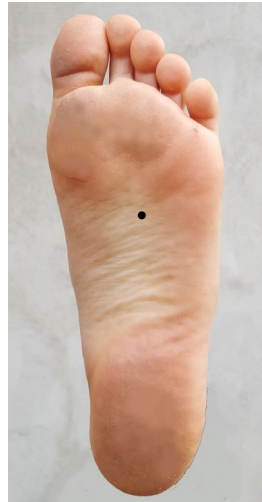
Bubbling spring (KD 1): On the sole of the foot, in the depression when the foot is pointed, approximately at the front third and the back two thirds of the line from the web between the 2nd and 3rd toes to the back of the heel.

Directions:

Step 1: Massage with 1 drop Lavender essential oil mixed with teaspoon of carrier oil.

Step 2: Apply warmth, and/or wushu lin-dera paste

To make paste: grind wushu herb and mix with honey or water until paste. Wrap foot and sleep with it on.



## Exercises

### Tennis ball foot massage

Directions: stand upright on both feet, then place tennis ball on ground and one foot on tennis ball. Meeting point of ball and foot should be at Bubbling Spring (see above for location.) Move foot around to massage the area, using however much pressure is desired.

## Constipation

Part of the stress response entails energy being diverted from the digestive system towards other systems that need the energy more (i.e skeletal muscle groups, eyes, etc.) This can result in poor digestive processes. Another part of the stress response causes a dry mouth, meaning less enzymes to digest food. Both of these issues can lead to problems like constipation.

## Questions

Do you pass hard or painful stools?

Do you become chronically constipated coinciding with stressful periods or events?

## Lifestyle

Don't make mealtimes stressful! Try to avoid having stressful conversations over food. Take your time finishing meals.

Try some gentle exercise if you live a mostly sedentary lifestyle.

Eat more fiber! Some good sources are seeds (chia, hemp, flax, etc), beans, and crunchy or stringy vegetables.

Try drinking more water.

Take more vitamin C, between 3,000 and 12,000 milligrams.

## Herbal Formulations

Chai hu shu gan san, or bupleurum decoction (modified for constipation)



Begin with the Chai hu shu gan san found under General De-Stressing then add: hemp seeds 12 grams, biota seeds 12 grams, flax seeds 12 grams.

To stimulate peristalsis:

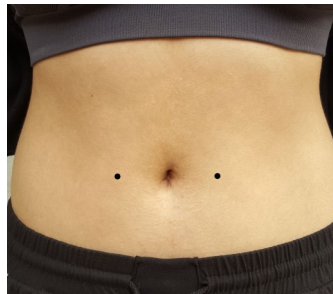
Ingredients: lukewarm water 12 ounces, honey 1 table-spoon.

Preparation: mix water and honey and drink in the morning just after waking. Walk 200 paces afterwards and try to use the bathroom.

### Acupressure points

#### Four Doors

Heavenly Pivot (ST 25): slide pointer fingers horizontally out from navel in both directions until they fall into a depression. Alternatively, four thumbprint widths out from the navel in both directions.



Ocean of Chi: slide pointer down from navel until it kinda just... stops. Alternatively, two thumbprint widths down from the navel.



Central Vent (REN 12): four thumbprint widths up from navel.



Directions:

Method 1: Place mugwort cone on each point and burn at the same time. Use cone till it burns down. cigar till skin becomes red. Caution to not burn skin.

Method 2: massage with hands up on the right, down on the left, in a circular motion hitting all points. Repeat as desired.

Method 3: lay on back with knees to chest. Legs should be pressing on the abdominal cavity. Move curled legs in circular motion, up on the right, down on the left. Repeat as desired.

# Impaired Immune System

When in the stress response, the body tends to neglect systems less important than the ones responsible for basic motor control. The immune system is one such neglected system. This can result in feelings of fatigue that do not go away after sleeping, constant sore throat, susceptibility to illnesses, and/or sensitivity to changes in weather.

## Lifestyle

Take power naps. See General De-Stressing page

Get at least 20 minutes of sunlight, preferably not during the hottest hours of the day (mornings or afternoons, not midday.)

Establish a steady sleep schedule.

## Herbal Formulations

### Immune Boost Decoction

Ingredients: reishi mushrooms 10 grams, cordyceps 10 grams, and Astragalus root 20 grams, Five-flavor berry (*Schisandra chinensis*) 6 grams.

Note: Caution if you have candida.

### Supplements

Allicillin or Oregano pills

## Acupressure Points

### Illuminating Ocean (KID 6) and Pond at the Bend (LI 11)

KID 6: On the medial aspect of the foot, in the depression below the tip of the medial malleolus.



LI 11: With a flexed elbow, find the outermost point of the crease, then move about one thumb breadth towards the hand.



Directions: Gently massage or use Tiger Warmer.

Source of Yin (CV 4): On the anterior median line of the lower abdomen, 3 thumb breadths below the belly button.



Directions: Massage or use moxibustion (see moxibustion reference page).

# Cold Sores

The Herpes Virus simplex 1 presents itself as cold sores: split, blistering, red welts around or inside the mouth or nose. Once you contract the virus you have it for life. However, the virus lays dormant unless it is triggered or the immune system is compromised. Triggers include cold weather, hormone changes during menstruation or pregnancy, and excessive sunlight. In addition to being a trigger in its own right, stress can weaken the immune system enough for the cold sores to manifest. Thankfully, the virus tends to burn itself out: each breakout will be less severe than the one before it. Though the virus itself is with you forever, the cold sore symptoms can be treated.

## Questions

Before the blister, did you feel a tingling or numbness where it later appeared?

Did the manifestation of your cold sores coincide or shortly follow a stressful event or period? If so, is this a trend?

## Lifestyle

During a cold sore breakout, avoid the amino acid arginine. Some foods to avoid include tree nuts, cocoa, peanuts, sesame seeds, and brown rice.

To avoid spreading the virus, do not allow the sore to come into contact with another person. This also means not sharing water bottles, cups, chapstick, etc.

## Herbal Formulations

### Herpes simplex 1 essential oil blend

Ingredients: 1 part geranium essential oil, 1 part melissa essential oil, 1 part lavender essential oil, 10 parts tea tree essential oil.

Directions: apply topically up to 3 times per day.

Note: This mixture is particularly drying. Use until dry crust forms on blister, then discontinue. Follow by using a fatty oil, such as olive oil, on the dried blister.

### Gentiana Decoction

Ingredients: chinese gentian root 10 grams, bupleurum root 10 grams, gardenia fruit 6 grams, scutellaria root 10 grams, Chinese angelica root 10 grams, fresh rehmannia 10 grams, caulis mutong 6 grams, plantago seeds 10 grams, alisma rhizome 6 grams, licorice root 3 grams.

Pills available for purchase online if you do not want to make it yourself.

Use with caution. Do not use for longer than 10 days in a row. After another 10 days it can be used again.

### Shade Dew Ointment

Available for purchase online

Garlic Supplements, up to three caps per day.

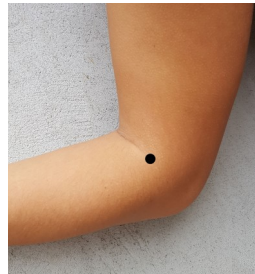
## Acupressure Points

### Illuminating Ocean (KID 6) and Pond at the Bend (LI 11)

KID 6: On the medial aspect of the foot, in the depression below the tip of the medial malleolus.



LI 11: With a flexed elbow, find the outermost point of the crease, then move about one thumb breadth towards the hand.



Directions: Gently massage or use Tiger Warmer.

### Ocean of Blood (SP 10)

Look for a bulky protrusion on the inside of the knee. If you rest the top of your right palm on the top of the right kneecap, your thumb should be on top of it.



Directions: Massage with fingertips or thumbs.

## Tension Headaches

Headaches have a multitude of causes. Some include: hormonal imbalances, high blood pressure, toxicity (intoxication; hangover, meds, etc.), physical trauma, high fever, meningitis, tumors, sinus issues, lack of sleep, and dehydration.

Here we are talking about headaches caused by tension, which could be caused by stress. As we know, stress tends to cause a general “tightness.” A tight upper body results in less blood to the brain, which can result in tension headaches.

### Questions

Do you have neck or upper torso pain? Are your eyes often strained?

Do you “keep your stress” in your shoulders?

When you are stressed, do you:

- Hike up or tense your shoulders?
- Clench your jaw?
- Make tight fists?

When your tension goes away, does your headache go with it?

### Lifestyle

Avoid inversions (headstands, handstands, roller coasters, etc.)

## Herbal Formulations

### Chai hu shu gan san, or bupleurum decoction (modified)

Begin with the Chai hu shu gan san found under General De-Stressing then add: 10 additional grams of lovage root, angelica root 20 grams, feverfew 20 grams.

### Epsom salt foot bath

Ingredients: rosemary tea, handful of epsom salt.

Directions: Soak until the water becomes coolish

To make rosemary tea: mix 1 cup fresh rosemary, 4 cups water. Bring mix to boil, then simmer for 30 min. Yields 3 cups.

### Essential oil blend

Vegetable oil 1 tablespoon, lavender essential oil 10 drops, peppermint essential oil 5 drops, Vitamin E 200 IU's (optional)

Directions: Mix oils together in amber glass bottle. Warm in double boiler, then massage into temples and just beyond hairline. Inhale essences from cupped hands after massage.

Rub a drop of peppermint essential oil on each temple.

Note: Caution with essential oils directly on the skin.

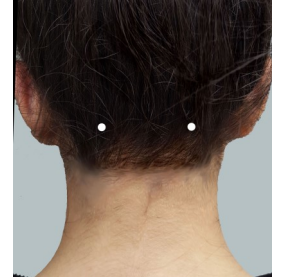
### Cold Compress

Directions: Soak cloth in cold water, then wring out and lay over eyes and forehead. Use for as long as desired and repeat as many times as necessary.

## Acupressure points

### Four Gates (see General De-Stressing page)

Wind pond (GB 20): On the nape, below the occiput, in the depression between the trapezius muscles



Bright eye (UB 1): On the face, in the depression superior to the inner canthus.



Great compliance (LIV 2): On the dorsum of the foot between the 1st and 2nd toes, proximal to the margin of the web at the junction of the red and white skin.



# Sciatica

The sciatic nerve is the longest nerve in the body. It starts near the tailbone, on the back of the hips, then runs along both legs. Sciatica occurs when pressure or tension is applied to the sciatic nerve. The stress response tends to tense up the legs and buttocks in order to launch an attack or make a quick getaway. A prolonged time in this state can cause tension in the lower back, which will in turn put pressure on the sciatic nerve, and thus cause sciatica.

## Questions

Do you have:

- Shooting pain starting from the lower back that goes down the leg?
- Tingling or numbness in any place touched by the sciatic nerve?
- Discomfort near hips or glute muscles?
- Difficulties sitting or standing?

Do you “keep your stress” in your lower back?

When stressed, do you clench your buttocks?

## Herbal Formulations

### Castor Oil Pack

Ingredients: Castor oil, Absorbent cloth or flannel

Preparation: Soak cloth in oil.

Directions: Place oil pack onto skin, then apply heating pad. Separate heating pad from oil pack with foil or plastic. Keep applied for 30 min.

### Epsom salt bath

Ingredients: handful of Epsom salt, bath full of warm water, tablespoon of apple cider vinegar, 7 drops lavender or 3 drops ylang-ylang essential oil.

Directions: soak for no longer than 20 minutes

### Herbal plaster I

Ingredients: 10 grams ground safflower, 10 grams finely ground frankincense, 10 grams finely ground myrrh, 10 grams ground cinnamon, 3 drops camphor essential oil, Chinese angelica (dang gui), 1 egg white.

Preparation: Mix everything together with egg white, making into paste. Paste should not be runny, but not so thick that it cannot be spread.

Directions: Apply as plaster.

## Herbal plaster 2

Ingredients: tablespoon of ground dried ginger powder, water.

Preparation: mix together into paste, adding however much water is needed to make a paste. Apply as plaster

## Essential oil blend

Ingredients: tablespoon of safflower oil, 5 drops frankincense essential oil, 5 drops of myrrh essential oil.

Preparation: Mix oils together.

Directions: apply directly onto skin.

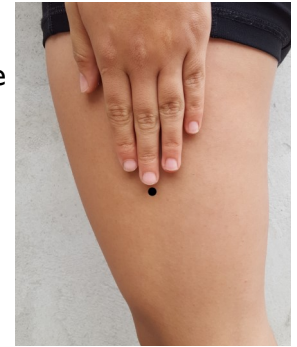
Optional: use heating pad on area as well.

## Acupressure Points

Yang Spring (GB-34): On the lateral aspect of the lower leg, in the depression anterior and inferior to the head of the fibula.



Jumping Circle (GB-31): Standing erect with hands close to sides, the point can be found at the tip of the middle finger.



# Herbal Formulations

## Notes

When trying new essential oils: mix 1 teaspoon of carrier oil (coconut, palm, olive, castor, etc.) and one drop of new essential oil. Rub onto inconspicuous place and check for reaction within 2 hours.

Do not use essential oils while pregnant.

Unless prescribed by aromatherapist, do not use essential oils internally. All recommendations here are for topical use only.

# Acupressure Points

## Moxibustion

Moxibustion is the application of heat to a specific area or acupuncture point on the body.

Moxa is obtained from the herbal plant 'Artemisia Vulgaris', also commonly called mugwort.

This "moxa" is burned close to the skin to heat the specific pressure points. It has also been used in various size cones that are placed on the skin directly or on top of an herb or some salt and burned.

The moxa leaf is bitter and acrid, producing warmth when used in small amount and strong heat when used in large amount. The acrid odor [spicy fragrance] of the leaf can travel through your acupuncture meridians, regulate your energy, and expel cold.

We do not use it just for the heat but for the effects that the mugwort vapors and smoke have by entering the body, either through the skin where the moxa is burned or through breathing the fumes, or both. The heat is also important, but it is not the sole function.