



Do-It-Yourself Acupressure for Travel

By Denise Cicuto

The summer travel season is officially underway. While our away-from-home experiences often represent the high points of our summers, they also have a tendency to tax our physical and

emotional health. After all, our bodies are not meant for sitting in tin cans, sometimes with hundreds of other people, while breathing recycled air for hours on end.

Fortunately, applying pressure to certain acupuncture points can help alleviate some common travel ailments.

Press these points in a circular motion, using firm pressure, several times a day for at least one minute. You can use your fingertip, knuckle or the closed tip of a pen to press the points, or have a travel companion press them for you.

Lose the Headache

Large Intestine 4

Located on the back of the hand, between the thumb and index finger, Large Intestine 4 is one of the most important acupuncture points for anything having to do with the head and face. It is a great point for alleviating headaches and sinus pressure. (Note: This point is contraindicated during pregnancy.) Learn more about this point's uses and location [here](#).

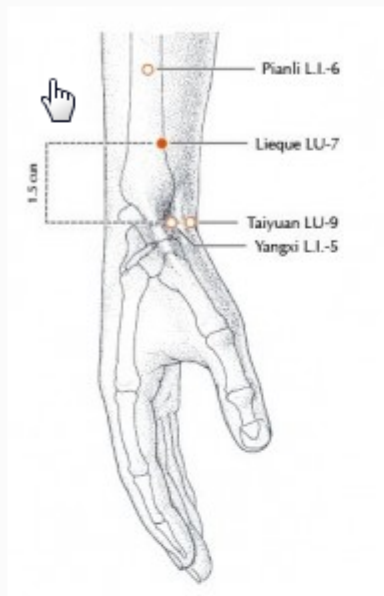
Large Intestine 20, Stomach 2 and Bladder 2



These points make a wondrous trio for sinus pressure and head congestion. Each point is pressed twice, symmetrically on both sides of the face, equaling six total points. The picture shows how it should look when you're pressing all six points. You're going for just outside the nostril for Large Intestine 20, just below the eye for Stomach 2, and the inner end of the eyebrow for Bladder 2.

Boost Your Immune System

Lung 7



Make a thumbs-up sign. When you do that, you'll see a depression at the base of your thumb (referred to as the anatomical snuffbox). From that depression, Lung 7 is located approximately two finger widths up your arm (*see picture at left*). This point is good for bolstering your body's defensive energy, helping to keep your immune system strong. It also helps with cough, headache and stiff neck.

Stomach 36

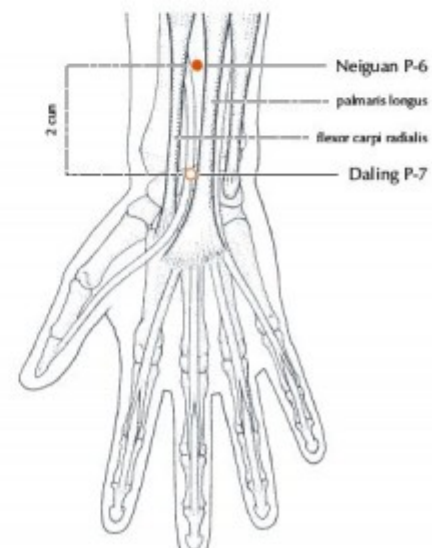
Stomach 36 is one of the best acupuncture points on the body for strengthening the immune system and recovering from fatigue. It is a very energizing point. Stomach 36 is found about

a hand length below the patella of the knee, just outside the prominent tibia bone. Learn more about this point's uses and location [here](#).

Settle Your Stomach

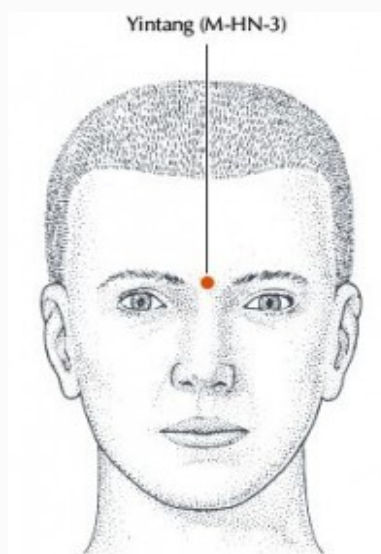
Pericardium 6

You know those wrist bands that help with sea sickness? Ever wonder how they work? They stimulate an acupuncture point! Specifically, they target Pericardium 6, located inside the wrist, about two-and-a-half fingers up the arm from the wrist crease (*see picture at right*). This point settles the stomach and is commonly used to control nausea. A winning stomach-soothing combo is Pericardium 6 with Stomach 36, which in addition to the immune-boosting properties mentioned above, is also a principal point for nausea, stomach pain and diarrhea.



Decrease Stress

Yintang



So easy to find and so effective, Yintang is your third eye, located in the middle of your eyebrows (*see picture at left*). Because of its location, it can help reduce frontal headaches, but its most common use is for stress reduction. While fun, traveling also can be stressful. Yintang is a great go-to point for calming yourself during those tense or anxious moments.

Liver 3

Located between the big and second toes, Liver 3 is useful for grounding the frenetic and at-times destabilizing nature of travel. This not only reduces anxiety but also can help eliminate insomnia and other stress-related side effects of traveling.

Learn more about this point's uses and location [here](#).

Pop Your Ears, No Gum Required

San Jiao 21, Small Intestine 19 and Gallbladder 2

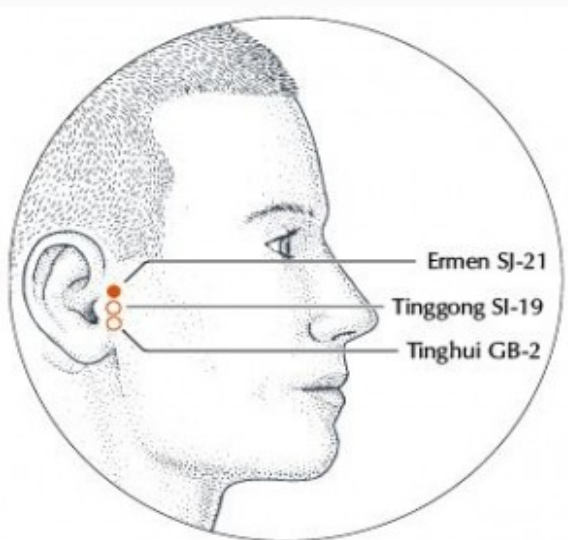
This is another great trio. These three acupuncture points are located in a vertical line directly in front of the ear tragus (*see picture at right*). Opening and closing your mouth while simultaneously rubbing these three points can cause your ears to pop.

Revive Yourself

If travel has you feeling all-around stressed and fatigued, revive yourself with a rigorous ear massage. The ear in acupuncture is a

microcosm of the whole body, so ear points can be effective at treating conditions that involve multiple systems. Using your thumb and index finger, follow around from the top of your ear down to your earlobes. Along the way you'll hit acupuncture points for everything from anxiety to fatigue to back pain to allergies. Sometimes a good ear massage is just the thing for helping you through the next leg of your journey.

Whether you're traveling by air, land or sea this summer, these acupuncture points should be staples in your first-aid kit. Wishing you happy and healthy travels!



Photos by Sara Calabro

Acupuncture point infographics from A Manual of Acupuncture



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