
Adapt and Transform

The Art of Self-Healing

by Jessie Li Hung Lee

Needles

There is always a distance between what
the eyes observe and the real experience.
If you don't try and experience it for
yourself, you will never know it.

Caleb Lee (My father)

My father was a six-foot-tall handsome man. Due to his being a quarter Russian, he didn't quite look Chinese. During WWII, he learned acupuncture when he was fifteen in Shan Dong's (山東) homeland, which lies north of Mainland China. He joined the military when he was nineteen and rose through the ranks until he became a lieutenant in charge of 2000 soldiers. He always told me stories about how he used needles to treat various illnesses and ease those in pain or panicking on the battlefield. But I never took an interest in acupuncture until much later.

The Chinese Civil War led to the Republic Of China, and the Kuomintang government lost the mainland to the Communists, leading to their arrival in Taiwan in 1949. My father was decommissioned from the army after he arrived in Taiwan. He had seen too much death, and the meaning of life inspired him to become a Christian pastor and serve in a small church that he built with his own hands nestled in the rolling hills of Hualien, on the east coast of Taiwan's lush green mountains.

He continued to use his acupuncture knowledge to help the brothers and sisters in the church. He was well-loved by the community, and tokens of appreciation came in steady streams. Fruits, cookies, and vegetables were always piled high on our kitchen table. I would stay by his side to observe and ask lots of questions. Despite my curiosity, I was scared of needles. Yet, there is always a distance between what the eyes observe and the real experience.

I was six years old and playing with some dogs in the garden of our house. It was a dusky orange evening in the countryside, with the night quietly approaching. All was peaceful until suddenly, my neck and head began to throb with pain. It felt like a sharp pinch and ached relentlessly.

I ran to my father and cried, "Dad, take me to the doctor! My head hurts so bad!" My dad was reading at the table. He took off his glasses and looked at me kindly. He replied, "No, you don't need to see the doctor. The clinic is closed right now, and our doctor doesn't work this late. Just let me put some needles in you."

"No!" I protested. "That's even scarier than my headache. Never!"

But my father ignored my complaints. He held onto me to keep me from slipping away. He took out some tiny stainless steel needles from a little silver box on the table next to him. He then sterilized the needle heads over a small flame until they were glowing red.

I was crying and yelling, “No! No! Don’t put needles in me! It’s scary. Let me go!” Suddenly, there was a small painless prick on my neck, like a mosquito had bitten me.

“That’s it,” my father said. “The needle is already in your neck. It’s not that bad, right? Now don’t move; just sit still. The needle has to be left in for fifteen to twenty minutes, depending on how bad your symptoms are. Sometimes we leave them in for longer.”

I sat still and became quiet. I stopped making a fuss. My father inserted a total of four needles to treat my headache. Two were on the cervical point of “Wind Pool” - Feng Shi 風池*, and another two on both of my hands on the “Joint Valley” - Hegu 合谷* points.

Five minutes passed, and I felt my severe headache dissipating little by little. After around fifteen minutes, my father took out all the needles, and my headache was gone. It amazed me. I opened my eyes, curious as to how my father did it.

Why? How? I wondered to myself.

My severe headache was gone! Truly incredible! I ran outside to the garden to find my dog Cookie and tell her about this miracle.

Meanwhile, I looked up at the sky to see the stars glittering in the night. It seemed like they were silently trying to tell me something. That was the first time experiencing acupuncture in my life.

Father told me, “If you don’t try it, you will never know it.” It was at that moment I became a true acupuncture believer.

My favorite self-help tip for headaches

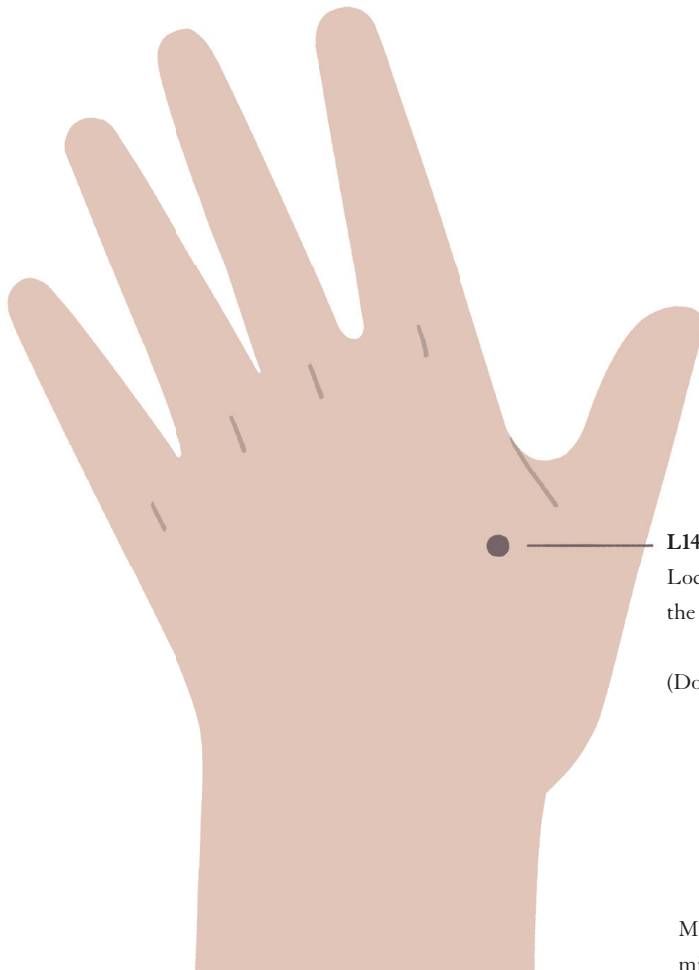
Use fingertip, a pen, or place a little red bean on the following points.
Gently massage 3-5 minutes for each point, a total of 10-15 minutes.

LI4 He Gu 合谷- Joint Valley Point

Use this point for:

- Eye and nose discomfort.
- Head weakness.
- Common cold and flu.
- Headache.
- Stomach ache and constipation.
- Toothache.
- Fatigue, low energy.

(Do not use this point during pregnancy)



LI4 He Gu 合谷

Located approximately in the middle of the 2nd metacarpal bone on its radial side.

(Do not use this point during pregnancy)

Massaging the big toes for 10 minutes can help with headaches as well.

GB20 Feng Chi 風池-Wind Pool Point

Use this point for:

- Headaches.
- Eye discomfort, blurriness, and optic neuritis.
- Migraines.
- Rhinitis and sinusitis symptoms.
- Common cold and flu.
- Sinus problems.

Located on the indent between the upper portion of the sternocleidomastoid muscle and the trapezius.

