

# **The Combination of Points**

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# THE COMBINATION OF ACUPUNCTURE POINTS

The art of acupuncture consists in selecting the right points and combining them in a harmonious way. A successful acupuncture treatment depends on many factors among which are:

1) a correct diagnosis ("correct" within the type of acupuncture used, be it):

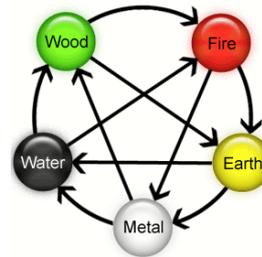
Chinese



Korean



5-Element



Japanese, etc);



2) a correct plan of treatment

3) a correct choice of points

4) a balanced combination of points

5) the appropriate needling technique.

Combining points in a safe, effective and harmonious way is a very important part of an acupuncture treatment. Using points according to their action brings into play the particular nature of the individual points while combining points in a harmonious way draws on the channel system as a whole, and harmonizes Yin and Yang, Top and Bottom, Left and Right, and Front and Back.



The feeling that the patient experiences when points are combined well, is unmistakable: it may be a sense of relaxation, elation, alertness or peacefulness, or a combination of all these.

Ideally, the patient should experience one or more of the above feelings during and after every treatment. If points are combined well the patient may feel during treatment as if they are connected among themselves and a needling sensation propagates from one to another.

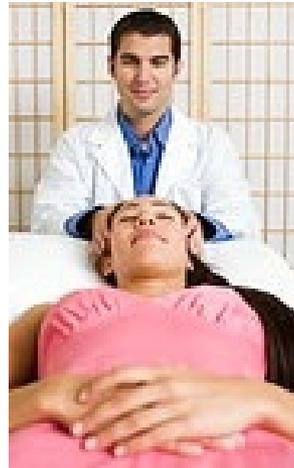
One particular patient said that the points "*felt as if forming a circle, as if they were connected*". Another felt as if "*a cool liquid was moving into her hands*". Another patient said that during the session she went "*into a very deep space*".



As for the feeling experienced after an acupuncture treatment, this is described by patients in many different ways: "I feel brighter", "I feel deeply relaxed", "I feel more awake", "I feel like I had a shower", "I feel more grounded", "I feel spaced out", "I feel like I have been plugged in", "I feel very light", "I feel very heavy", "I feel like I am floating", "I feel like giggling", "I feel euphoric", "I feel like I could dance", etc.

In order to observe the patient's reactions and sensations during the treatment, I see one patient at a time or, at least, to allow for spending enough time with each patient; otherwise we will miss their reactions and comments and we will not be able to learn as much. I observe the patient while the needles are retained and, when necessary, I will occasionally change the point combinations during the treatment.

In a few, unusual cases it is necessary to observe the patient very closely during the treatment as his or her reactions change very rapidly.

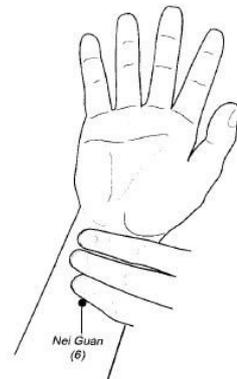


## CASE HISTORY

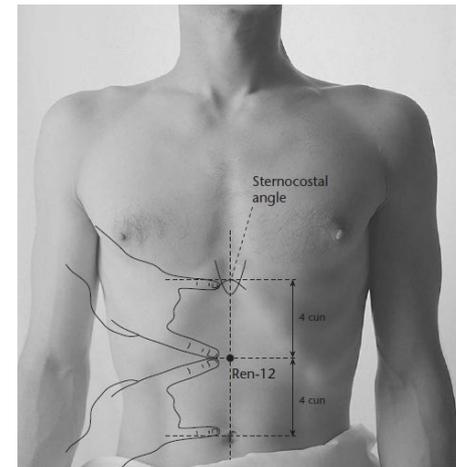
During an acupuncture session I observed that a patient whom I knew was normally very relaxed during the treatment, on this occasion looked slightly uncomfortable and restless. I asked her about this and she said she felt a sensation of constriction in the chest and throat.

On examining the point prescription used I came to the conclusion that it was unbalanced in so far as all the points were on the legs and torso with none on the arms: on my inserting P-6 Neiguan and withdrawing Ren-12 Zhongwan, her feeling of constriction in the chest and throat disappeared within seconds.

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## CASE HISTORY

A patient who was being treated for post-viral fatigue syndrome said that her head cleared almost immediately during the acupuncture session and she felt brighter in general: this feeling came over her in a wave but disappeared after only a few minutes, being replaced by a sense of general tiredness and heaviness.

On my inserting Du-20 Baihui, the wave of well-being returned, only to disappear again after a few minutes. During subsequent sessions I therefore decided to follow her sensations very closely: I withdrew the needles shortly after the wave of well-being appeared. This approach produced much better results in this case.

There are of course very many ways of choosing points: according to the 5 Elements, according to pathogenic factors, according to seasons, according to tenderness, according to the theory of open points, according to their actions, according to indications, according to the theory of the 5 *Shu* points, and many others.

Furthermore, there are many national variations in the style of acupuncture so that, for example, Japanese or Korean acupuncture is quite different from Chinese acupuncture.



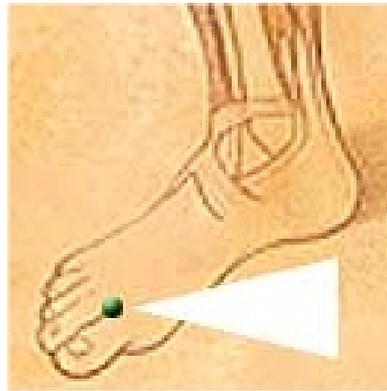
However, it could be said that all the different ways of choosing points can be narrowed down to two basic variations:

selecting a point according to its particular action, function, nature or quality or  
selecting a point according to its position and dynamics within the channel system.

The former approach emphasizes the role of the point in isolation from the channels, while the latter emphasizes the role of the point within the channel system.

For example, one can use LIV-2 Xingjian for its action of draining Liver-Fire, or as a “sedation” point according to the 5 Elements: this approach relies on an intrinsic quality of LIV-2 in draining Fire or in sedating the Liver ("because" it is the Fire point).

Alternatively, one can select LIV-2 to draw Qi downwards within the Liver channel: this approach makes use of the point's dynamics within the channel. When LIV-2 is used in this way to draw Qi downwards, the fact that it is the Fire point is irrelevant, as the point is seen not in isolation but in relation to the channel's flow of Qi.



The Chinese stress on needle manipulation (present in all acupuncture classics) is based on viewing points in isolation, e.g. ST-40 Fenglong (needled with reducing method) to resolve Phlegm or LIV-2 Xingjian to drain Liver-Fire.

Over the years I have developed a style of treatment that emphasizes the role of the points within the Qi dynamics in the channels and the harmonious combination of points: when the combination of points is balanced, it will automatically bring into play the flow of Qi in the channel system achieving therapeutic results without the need for very strong manipulation of individual points.

In other words, instead of strongly manipulating separate points, if the combination of points is right we may let the channel system “do the work”. That is not to say, however, that the manipulation of needles is not important.

