Ear Acupuncture Therapy

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Ear acupuncture therapy treats and prevents diseases by stimulating certain points on the auricles with needles or other methods.

- This therapy incorporates a wide-range of indications and it's a simple technique.
- It is also used as a diagnostic indicator for disease.
In many classic medical literary texts there are descriptions of stimulating the ears and certain auricular areas with needles, moxibustion, massage and herbal suppositories to treat and prevent diseases; as well as inspecting and palpating the auricles to assist in disease diagnoses.

“when pathogenic factors attack the liver, it will cause pain in the hypochondriact... needle the blue vessels around the ear to relieve the dragging pain.” ——— Chapter 20 of Ling Shu

“for the deaf who can’t hear, needle the center of the ear.” —— the 24th chapter of Ling Shu
The ears are closely correlated to the meridians.

1. Hand and Foot-Shaoyang and Hand-YangMing, go into the ear; the meridians of Foot-YangMing and Foot-Taiyang are anterior and superior to the ear respectively.

2. All the Yin meridians don’t go into the ear directly, but they are indirectly connected to the ear through their divergent channels, which converge with the corresponding Yang meridians.
all the twelve meridians either go directly or indirectly to the ear.

Among the eight extra meridians, the *Yin heel vessel* and *Yang heel vessel* meridians are distributed over the posterior area to the root of the ear;

the *Yin link vessel* meridian passes through the head and subsequently enters the ear.

“the ear is the confluent place of all the meridians.” --- Ling Shu
The physiological correlations between the ear and the five zang-organs are recorded in many ancient classics.

“the qi of the kidney connects the ear, making the ear hear various kinds of sounds.” --- Chapter 17 of *Ling Shu*

“the lung dominates sound, making the ear hear the sound.” --- *Nan Jing* (Classic Medical Problem)

“the kidney is the master of the ear, and the heart is its guest.” --- *Zhen Zhi Zhun Sheng* (The Standards of Diagnosis and Treatment)
When diseases or disorders are present in the internal organs or tissues of the body, positive signs and characteristic changes in the electrical resistance of the skin may occur on corresponding areas of the auricles.
The auricle is classified into the concave part of the anterior ear, and the convex part, of the posterior aspect of the ear.
**Auricular Surface Anatomy**

**Helix**: The portion of the auricular border that bends inward.

**Helix Cauda**: The inferior part of the helix, at the junction of the helix and the lobule.
**Helix Tubercle:** The nodular process on the postero-superior portion of the auricle.

**Helix Crus:** The portion of the helix which extends into the auricular concha.
**Antihelix:** The Y-shaped prominence opposite to the helix, that composes the principal part of antihelix and the superior inferior crus of the antihelix.

**The Principal Part of Antihelix:** The inferior section of antihelix; parallel to the helix.

**Superior Antihelix Crus:** The superior branch of the upper portion of the antihelix.

**Inferior Antihelix Crus:** The inferio-anterior branch of the upper portion of the antihelix.
Auricular Surface Anatomy

**Triangular Fossa:**
The triangular depression between the two branches (superior & inferior) of the antihelix crus.

**Scapha:**
The groove between the helix and the antihelix.
Tragus:
The cartilaginous projection or rounded flap in front of the auricle anterior to the ear opening.

Supratragic Notch: The depression between the upper tragus and the helix crus.

Intertragic Notch: The depression between the tragus and antitragus.
Antitragus: The projection superior to the lobe and opposite to the tragus.

Helix Notch: The depression between the antitragus and antihelix.

Lobe: The lowest portion of the auricle where there is no cartilage.
**Concha:** The depression between part of the helix, antihelix, antitragus, tragus and orifice of the external auditory foramen, which consists of cymba concha and cavum concha.

**Cavum Concha:** The cavum (cavity) inferior to the helix crus.

**Cymba Concha:** The cavum (cavity) superior to the helix crus.

**Orifice of the External Auditory Meatus:** The opening in the cavum concha.
The distribution of auricular points and areas resemble the shape of *an upside-down fetus*.
Auricular Point Distribution

The rule is as follows:

- Points located on the lobe are related to the head and facial region;
- those on the scapha to the upper extremities;
- those on the antihelix and its two crura to the trunk and lower extremities,
- those in the cavum and cymba concha to the internal organs.
The helix is divided into 12 zones.
**Center of the Ear:**

**Location:** The helix crus

**Zone 1**

**Indications:**
Hiccups, urticaria (hives), pruritus of the skin, enuresis, hemoptysis and other bleeding disorders.

**Rectum**

**Location:** Anterior & superior to the ridge of the helix crus

**Zone 2**

**Indications:**
Constipation, diarrhea, anal prolapse, hemorrhoids
**Urethra**

**Location:** Superior to the Rectum  
**Zone 3**

**Indications:** Frequent, painful dribbling urination; retention of urine.

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**External Genitals**

**Location:** Anterior to the inferior antihelix crus  
**Zone 4**

**Indications:** Testitis, epididymitis, pruritus vulvae.
Anus
Location: Anterior to the triangular fossa
Zone 5
Indications: Hemorrhoids, anal fissures.

Ear Apex
Location: Tip of the auricle, superior to the helix when folded towards the tragus, or
The junction of Zone 6 and 7
Indications: Fever, hypertension, acute conjunctivitis, hordeolum, toothache, insomnia.
**Tubercle**

**Location:**
On the helix tubercle

**Zone 8**

**Indications:**
Dizziness, headache, hypertension.
**Helix 1**
**Location:**
Inferior to the helix tubercle

**Zone 9**

**Helix 2**
**Location:**
Inferior to helix 1 Zone 10

**Helix 3**
**Location:**
Superior to helix 2 Zone 11

**Helix 4**
**Location:**
Inferior to helix 3 Zone 12

**Indications:**
Fever, tonsillitis, upper respiratory tract infection.
The Scapha is separated into 6 equal sections, which are listed in descending order as Zones 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.
**Fingers**
**Location:**
The upper section of the scapha Zone 1
**Indication:**
Paronychia, pain and numbness of the fingers.

**Wrist**
**Location:**
Inferior to the Fingers Zone 2
**Indication:**
Wrist pain.
Wind Stream “Feng Xi”
Location:
Between the fingers and wrist in front of the helix tubercle
Zone 3
Indication:
Urticaria (hives), pruritus of the skin, allergic rhinitis.

Elbow
Location:
Inferior to the wrist Zone 3
Indication:
External humeral epicondylitis, elbow pain.
**Shoulder**
Location: Inferior to the elbow
Zone 4 and 5
Indication: Peri-arthritis of the shoulder, shoulder pain.

**Clavicle**
Location: Inferior to the shoulder
Zone 6
Indication: Peri-arthritis of the shoulder.
The antihelix is separated into 13 sections.
• The superior crus of the antihelix is separated into 3 equal sections
• The superior section is separated into 2 equal parts
• The inferior crus of the antihelix is also separated into 3 equal sections
• The body of antihelix is separated into 5 equal sections
**Heel**

**Location:**
Anterio-superior section of the superior crus

**Zone 1**

**Indication:**
Heel pain

**Toes**

**Location:**
Posterio-superior section of the superior crus, inferior to the apex

**Zone 2**

**Indication:**
Paronychia, pain in the toes.
**Ankle**
Location: Inferior to the toes and heel Zone 3
Indication: Ankle sprains

**Knee**
Location: Middle third of the superior crus Zone 4
Indication: Pain of the knee joint, sciatica.
**Hip**

**Location:**
Lower third of the superior crus  Zone 5

**Indication:**
Pain of the hip joint, sciatica, pain of lumbo-sacral area, paralysis of the lower extremities.
**Sciatic Nerve**

**Location:**
Anterior 2/3's of the inferior crus  Zone 6

**Indication:**
Sciatica, paralysis of the lower extremities.
**Sympathetic**

**Location:**
Junction between the terminus of the inferior crus and the inner border of the helix The anterior end of Zone 6

**Indication:**
Gastrointestinal spasms, angina pectoris, biliary colic, ureterolithiasis, functional disturbances of the automatic nervous system.
**Buttocks**

**Location:**
The posterior 1/3 of the inferior crus Zone 7

**Indication:**
Sciatica, gluteal fasciitis.
**Abdomen**

Location:
Superior 2/5's of the anterior part of the antihelix body

Zone 8

Indication:
Abdominal pain or distension, diarrhea, acute lumbar strain, dysmenorrhea, afterpains.
**Lumbo-Sacral Vertebrae**

**Location:**
Posterior to the Abdomen

**Zone 9**

**Indication:**
Pain in the lumbo-sacral region.

**Chest**

**Location:**
The middle 2/5's of the anterior part of the antihelix body

**Zone 10**

**Indication:**
Chest and hypochondriac pain, intercostals neuralgia, chest distress, mastitis.
**Thoracic vertebrae**

**Location:**
Posterior to the Chest Zone 11

**Indication:**
Chest pain, premenstrual swelling and pain of the breasts, mastitis, insufficient lactation after childbirth.
**Neck**

**Location:**
Inferior 1/5 of the anterior part of the antihelix body Zone 12

**Indication:**
Stiff neck, neck pain.

**Cervical Vertebrae**

**Location:**
Posterior to the Neck Zone 13

**Indication:**
Stiff neck, cervical syndrome.
it is separated into three equal sections:
The middle 1/3 is Zone 3.
The anterior 1/3 is divided into 3 equal parts
The posterior 1/3 has 2 equal sections
Superior Triangular Fossa
Location: Superior anterior 1/3 of the triangular fossa Zone 1
Indication: Hypertension.
**Internal Genitalia**

**Location:**
The inferior part of the anterior 1/3 of the triangular fossa  Zone 2

**Indication:**
Dysmenorrhea, irregular menstruation, leukorrhagia, dysfunctional uterine bleeding, impotence, seminal emissions, premature ejaculations.
**Middle Triangular Fossa**

**Location:**
The middle 1/3 of the triangular fossa Zone 3

**Indication:**
Asthma

**Ear Shenmen**

**Location:**
The superior part of the posterior 1/3 of the triangular fossa Zone 4

**Indication:**
Insomnia, excessive dreaming, withdrawal syndrome, epilepsy, hypertension, neurasthenia.
**Pelvis**

**Location:** The inferior part of the posterior 1/3 of the triangular fossa

**Zone 5**

**Indication:** Pelvic inflammation, appendagitis.
The tragus is separated into 4 zones.

Points on the Tragus
**Superior Tragus**  
**Location:**  
Superior 1/2 of the lateral surface Zone 1  
**Indication:**  
Pharyngitis, rhinitis.

**Inferior Tragus**  
**Location:**  
Inferior 1/2 of the lateral surface Zone 2  
**Indication:**  
Rhinitis, nasal obstructions.
**External Ear**

**Location:**
Supratragic notch close to the helix
Superior border of Zone 1

**Indication:**
External otitis, tympanitis, tinnitus.

**Apex of Tragus**

**Location:**
Top of the upper eminence of the tragus
Posterior border of Zone 1

**Indication:**
Fever, toothaches, anopsia.
External Nose
Location: Center of the lateral surface of tragus between Zones 1 and 2
Indication: Nasal vestibulitis, rhinitis.
Adrenal Gland

Location:
Top of the lower eminence of the tragus
Posterior border of Zone 2

Indication:
Hypotension, rheumatic arthritis, mumps, streptomycin poisoning, vertigo, asthma, circulatory collapse.
**Throat**  
**Location:** Upper half of the medial surface Zone 3  
**Indication:** Hoarseness, pharyngitis, tonsillitis, aphasia, asthma.

**Internal Nose**  
**Location:** Lower half of the medial surface Zone 4  
**Indication:** Rhinitis, maxillary sinusitis, epistaxis.
Anterior Tragus Apex
Location:
Lowest part of the tragus anterior to the intertragic notch
Lower border of Zone 2
Indication:
Pharyngitis, oral inflammation.
The antitragus is separated into 4 zones. the lateral surface of the antitragus and its posterior aspect is into 3 zones and the medial surface of the antitragus is Zone 4.
**Forehead**

**Location:** Anterior part of the lateral surface Zone 1  
**Indication:** Migraines, dizziness.

**Posterior intertragic notch**

**Location:** Antero-inferior part of the tragus posterior to the intertragic notch Lower border of Zone 1  
**Indication:** Frontal sinusitis.
**Temple**
**Location:**
Middle portion of the lateral surface of antitragus
**Zone 2 of antitragus**
**Indication:**
Migraine, dizziness.

**Occiput**
**Location:**
Posterior portion of the lateral surface of antitragus
**Zone 3**
**Indication:**
Dizziness, headaches, epilepsy, asthma, neurasthenia.
**Subcortex**

**Location:**
Medial surface of the antitragus

**Zone 4**

**Indication:**
Pain, tertian malaria, neurasthenia, pseudomyopia, insomnia.

**Apex of the Antitragus**

**Location:**
Top of the antitragus

**Intersection of Zones 1, 2 and 4**

**Indication:**
Asthma, mumps, testitis, epididymitis, neurodermatitis.
Midpoint of the Rim
Location:
Midpoint between apex of the antitragus and the helix notch Intersection of Zone 2, 3 and 4
Indication:
Enuresis, auditory vertigo, diabetes insipidus, functional uterine bleeding.
**Brainstem**

**Location:**
Helix notch between the antitragus and the antihelix Portion between Zone 3 and 4

**Indication:**
Vertigo, occipital pain, pseudomyopia.
The concha is separated into 18 zones by labeling points and lines.
**Mouth**

**Location:**
Anterior third of the area inferior to the helix crus

**Zone 1**

**Indication:**
Facial paralysis, stomatitis, cholecystitis, cholelithiasis, withdrawal syndrome, parodontitis, glossitis.
**Esophagus**

**Location:**
Middle 1/3 of the area inferior to the helix crus

**Zone 2**

**Indication:**
Esophagitis, esophagospasms.

**Cardia of the Stomach**

**Location:**
Posterior 1/3 of the area inferior to the helix crus

**Zone 3**

**Indication:**
Cardiospasm, nervous vomiting.
Stomach
Location: End of the helix crus Zone 4
Indication: Gastrospasms, gastritis, gastric ulcers, indigestion, nausea and vomiting, frontal headaches, toothaches, insomnia.
**Small Intestines**

**Location:**
Middle 1/3 of the area within the helix crus, part of the helix and line AB

**Zone 6**

**Indication:**
Indigestion, bellyaches, abdominal distension, tachycardia.
**Duodenum**

**Location:** Posterior 1/3 of the area within the helix crus, part of the helix and line AB Zone 5

**Indication:** Duodenal ulcers, cholecystitis, cholelithiasis, pylorospasms, abdominal distension, diarrhea, bellyaches.
Large Intestines

Location:
Anterior 1/3 of the area within the helix crus, part of the helix and line AB

Zone 7

Indication:
Diarrhea, constipation, cough, toothaches, acne.

Appendix

Location:
Between the small and large intestines Junction of Zones 6 and 7

Indication:
Simple appendicitis, diarrhea.
Angle of the Cymba concha
Location: Anterior area above the superior antihelix crus Zone 8
Indication: Prostatitis, urethritis.

Bladder
Location: Middle area superior to the superior antihelix crus Zone 9
Indication: Cystitis, enuresis, urine retention, lumbago, sciatica, occipital headaches.
**Kidney**

**Location:**
Posterior area superior to superior antihelix crus Zone 10

**Indication:**
Lumbago, tinnitus, neurasthenia, nephropyelitis, enuresis, seminal emissions, premature ejaculations, asthma, irregular menstruation.
**Ureter**

**Location:** Between the Kidney and Bladder Juncture of Zones 9 and 10

**Indication:** Ureteral colic due to calculi.
Pancreas & Gallbladder
Location:
Posterio-superior area of the cymba concha Zone 11
Indication:
Cholecystitis, cholelithiasis, ascariasis of the biliary tract, migraines, herpes zoster, tympanitis, tinnitus, acute pancreatitis.
Liver
Location:
Posterio-inferior area of cymba concha Zone 12
Indication:
Hypochondriac pain, vertigo, premenstrual syndrome, irregular menstruation, menopausal syndrome, hypertension, myopia, simple glaucoma.
**Spleen**

**Location:**
Posterio-superior area of the cavum concha below line BDZone 13

**Indication:**
Abdominal distention, diarrhea, constipation, poor appetite, functional uterine bleeding, leukorrhagia, Meniere’s disease.
**Middle of the Cymba Concha**

**Location:**
Between the Small intestines and Kidney Junction of Zones 6 and 10

**Indication:**
Bellyaches, abdominal distention, ascariasis of the biliary tract.
Heart Location: Central depression of the cavum concha Zone 15
Indication: Tachycardia, arrhythmias, angina pectoris, pulselessness disease (acrotism), neurasthenia, hysteria, stomatoglossitis.
**Trachea**

**Location:** Between the Heart and the external auditory foramen Zone 16

**Indication:** Asthma, bronchitis.

**Lung**

**Location:** Peripheral to the Heart and Trachea Zone 14

**Indication:** Cough, chest distress, hoarseness, pruritus, urticaria (hives), constipation, withdrawal syndrome.
SanJiao
Location:
Between the Lung and Endocrine area posterior-inferior to the external auditory foramen
Zone 17
Indication:
Constipation, abdominal distention, pain on the lateral sides of the upper extremities.
**Endocrine**

**Location:**
Anterior-inferior area of the cavum concha medial to the intertragic notch

**Zone 18**

**Indication:**
Dysmenorrhea, irregular menstruation, menopausal syndrome, acne, tertian malaria, hyper/hypo-thyroidism.
The ear lobe is separated into 9 zones. These zones are numbered anterior to posterior and from top to bottom: Zone 1, 2 and 3 of the lobe are located in the upper area; Zone 4, 5 and 6 in the middle and Zone 7, 8 and 9 in the lower area.
**Teeth**

Location: Anterio-superior area of the frontal surface  Zone 1

Indication: Toothaches, paradontitis, hypotension.

**Tongue**

Location: Middle-superior area of the frontal surface  Zone 2

Indication: Glossitis, stomatitis.
**Jaw**

**Location:**
Posterio-superior area of the frontal surface  Zone 3

**Indication:**
Toothaches, dysfunctia of the temporo-mandibular joint (TMJ).

**Anterior Lobe**

**Location:**
Anterio-medial area of the frontal surface  Zone 4

**Indication:**
Neurasthenia, toothaches.
**Eye**

**Location:** Center of the frontal surface

**Zone 5**

**Indication:** Acute conjunctivitis, flash ophthalmia, hordeolum, myopia.

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**Internal Ear**

**Location:** Posterio-medial area of the frontal surface

**Zone 6**

**Indication:** Auditory vertigo, tinnitus, amblyacusia, tympanitis.
**Cheek**

**Location:**
Between the Eye and Internal ear Junctions of Zones 5 and 6

**Indication:**
Facial paralysis, trigeminal neuralgia, acne, verruca plana, facial spasms, mumps.

**Tonsil**

**Location:**
Inferior area of the frontal surface Zone 7, 8 and 9

**Indication:**
Tonsillitis, pharyngitis.
The dorsal surface of ear is separated into 5 zones.
**Heart (P1)**

Location:
Upper area of the dorsal surface Zone 1

Indication:
Palpitations, insomnia, excessive dreaming.

**Lung (P2)**

Location:
Inner-Middle area Zone 2

Indication:
Asthma, pruritus.
**Spleen**
Location: Center Zone 3
Indication: Gastragia, indigestion, poor appetite.

**Liver**
Location: Mid-outer area Zone 4 of dorsal surface
Indication: Cholecystitis, cholelithiasis, hypochondriac pain.
**Kidney**  
**Location:** Lower area Zone 5  
**Indication:** Headaches, dizziness, neurasthenia.

**Groove**  
**Location:** The groove formed by the two branches of the antihelix  
**Indication:** Hypertension, pruritus.
Points on the Ear Root

[Diagram showing points on the ear root, including Heart, Liver, Stomach, Large Intestine, Root of Pan Vagae, Upper Ear Root, Lower Ear Root, Groove of Posterior Surface, and Kidney.]
**Upper**

**Location:**
Highest portion of ear root

**Indication:**
Epistaxis.

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**Root of Ear Vagus**

**Location:**
Junction of the dorsal surface of the auricle and mastoid process

**Indication:**
Cholecystitis, cholelithiasis, ascariasis of the biliary tract, bellyaches, diarrhea, nasal obstructions, tachycardia.
**Lower**

**Location:**
Lowest portion of the ear root

**Indication:**
Hypotension, lower limb paralysis, sequelae to infantile paralysis.
Indications for Ear Acupuncture

- Pain Diseases
- Inflammatory and Infectious Diseases
- Dysfunctional Diseases
- Hypersensitivity and Allergies
- Endocrine Diseases and Metabolic Disorders
- Miscellaneous
A. Point Selection According to the Affected Area: such as the Stomach point for gastric pain, etc.

B. Point Selection According to the Differentiation of Syndromes Based on the Theory of the Zang-Fu Organs: Examples: Points Kidney for cavities, Lung and Large Intestines for skin disease, etc.

C. Point Selection According to Differentiation of Syndromes Based on Meridian Theory: Examples: The Bladder or Pancreas & Gallbladder points for sciatica, the Large Intestines point for toothaches, etc.

D. Point Selection According to Western Medical Theory: Examples: Points Sympathetic, Adrenal Gland, Endocrine, etc.

E. Point Selection According to Clinical Experience: Example: Point External Genitalia for posterior leg pain.
There are various methods used to stimulate auricular points. Some of the commonly used techniques are:

- **Filiform Needling:**
  
  Select No. 26-30, 0.3-0.5 cun needles made of stainless steel, penetrate the cartilage 0.2-0.3 cun, retain the needle for 15-30 minutes.

- **Electrotherapy**

- **Needle Embedding Therapy**
  
  Treating auricular points by embedding intradermal needles is suitable for chronic and pain diseases.
Manipulation Methods

- **Auricular Seed Pressing Therapy**
  This therapy incorporates pressing and adhering seeds onto the auricles to stimulate the points continuously. Seeds such as vaccaria and cole, millet, green gram and white mustard seed can be used.

- **Point Injection Therapy**
  This therapy involves the injection of micro-amounts of medication into the auricular points.
Precautions

- Strict disinfection measures should be employed before doing acupuncture.
- When treating sprains and motor disabilities, ask patients to move their affected extremities after insertions to enhance the therapeutic effects.
- Needling is contraindicated with pregnant women and those with a history of multiple abortions.
Insomnia

**Prescription:**
- heart (CO15)
- kidney (CO10)
- brain stem (AT3, 4i)
- subcortex (AT4)
- shenmen (TF4)
- occiput (AT3)

For qi and blood deficiency, spleen (CO13) is added.

For liver-kidney depletion, liver (CO12) is added.

For disharmony between spleen and stomach, stomach (CO4) is added.
Migraine

Prescription:

forehead (AT1)、occiput (AT3)、temples (AT2)、shengmen (TF4)

For the rise of liver yang, add liver point (CO12)
For kidney essence deficiency, add kidney point (CO10)
For qi and blood deficiency add spleen point (CO13)
**Constipation**

**Prescription:**

- rectum (HX2), large intestine (CO7), subcortex (AT4)

For dry constipation add lung (CO14)
For qi and blood deficiency add spleen point (CO13) and kidney point (CO10).
Peri-Menopausal Syndrome

Prescription:

endocrine (CO18), kidney (CO10), liver (CO12), sympathetic nerve point (AH6a), subcortex (AT4)

For insomnia with irritation, and emotion abnormal add heart point (CO15), shengmen (TF4);
For hypertension add Groove (P5);
For impaired concentration, loss of memory add forehead (AT1), heart (CO15).
For red and sweaty face add lung (CO14), cheek (LO5,6i);
For dysphoria add ear apex (HX6.7i)