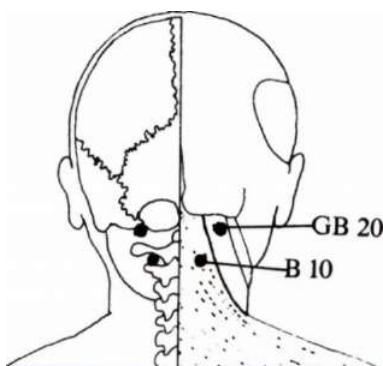


What to Do After a Back Injury

Immediately after an injury, ice is often applied to the area to reduce pain and swelling. Hot compresses can be used to relieve pain accompanied by stiffness or muscular contractions but should not be used when there is inflammation.

It is most important not to strain yourself further after a back injury. The healing process naturally takes time. Care for yourself with plenty of rest and proper nutrition; then gradually increase the time and intensity of the Bum Back exercises to rebuild the strength and flexibility of the spine.

Acupressure helps to relieve the muscular contractions that accompany a back injury. If a portion of the back is particularly sensitive, use only light touch in that area. Do not press directly on open wounds, bruises or inflamed areas. As the back becomes stronger, deeper pressure on the points will be appropriate. Points not located on the back can also be helpful for emotional trauma that often follows a back injury. Hold each of the following for approximately three minutes while breathing slowly and deeply.



GB 20, called the *Gates of Consciousness*, is located just below the base of the skull, in a hollow between two muscles. This first-aid point is often used after injuries to relieve pain and trauma. It is a key point for headaches, back pain, insomnia, nervousness, mental pressures, and neck tension.

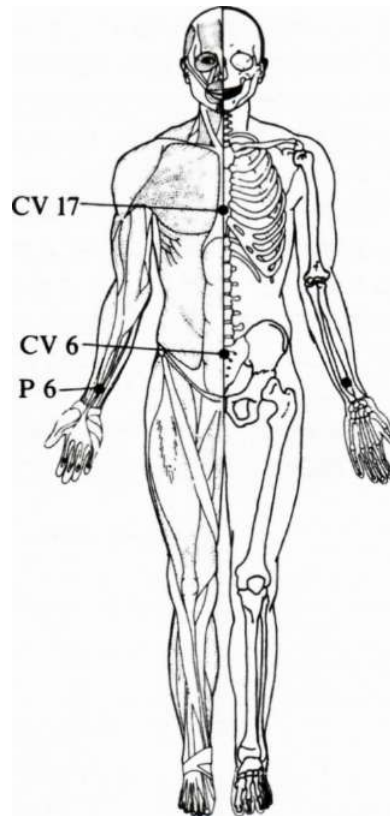
B 10, called *Heavenly Pillar*, is located on the upper portion of the neck, approximately one thumb's width outside the spine. Usually a lump of tension can be felt at this point. It is a key point for releasing stiffness, rigidity, and pain in the neck and back. This Acupressure point also strongly benefits the nervous system and is especially useful in times of stress and trauma.

Points for Trauma & Back Injuries

CV 17, called the *Sea of Tranquility*, is located in the center of the breastbone (sternum) in a hollow at the level of the heart. This point relieves anxiety, nervousness, hysteria, and trauma. Light to firm contact at this point is calming, soothing and relaxing.

CV 6, called the *Sea of Energy*, is located between the navel and the pubic bone on the mid-line. Gradual, deep pressure (to about one inch) at this point strengthens the general condition of the body. Acupressure on CV 6 can accelerate recovery from a back injury.

P 6, called the *Inner Gate*, is located two finger widths above the center of the inner wrist creases. This point is helpful for balancing the emotions and the internal organs. It has traditionally been used for nausea, appetite imbalances, indigestion, emotional trauma, dizziness and insomnia.



Complementary to Acupressure is Reflexology, deep breathing, visualization, and meditation* Pressure on the Reflexology points stimulates the nerve endings in the feet, hands, and ears. This triggers a healing response in the injured area. Long, deep breathing oxygenates the blood, improves circulation, reduces pain, and internally massages the back muscles. Practice the deep breathing, visualizations and meditations in this book and get plenty of rest to maximize the healing process after a back injury. You cannot force recuperation, but you *can* encourage it by paying attention to the needs of your body.

*Reflexology: see pp. 100-102.

Deep Breathing and Visualization: see pp. 97-98.

Meditation: see pp. 99.

Special Back Release Points

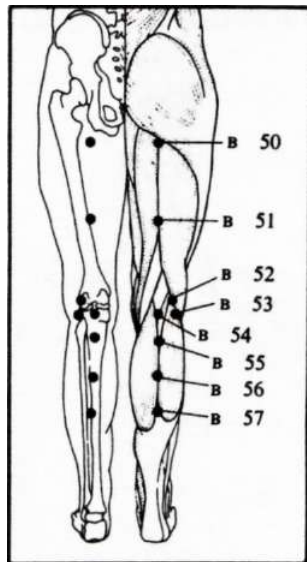
Like the Governing Vessel which connects the Acupressure points along the spine, the Bladder Meridian governs the back muscles. It connects points from the head down through the neck, back, back of the legs, and the feet. Acupressure on any Bladder Meridian point can benefit a back problem. Therefore, the areas behind the thighs, the backs of the knees and in

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the center of the calves contain points for the back. Prolonged finger pressure (three to five minutes) on these points allows tension and pain to drain from the back. Use the points illustrated to help relieve back pain regardless of where it is located.

Also, use these points to complement the release of back tension with either Acu-Yoga or Shiatsu. Gently stretching the backs of the legs as well as holding these points can help alleviate back tension, stiffness, aches and pains.



Acu Points	Traditional Associations
Bladder 50	Hemorrhoids, constipation, lumbago, sciatica, pain in the back.
Bladder 51	Inability to bend up and down easily, pain in the back and loins.
Bladder 52, 53	Muscular spasm of the calf, knee and loin pains.
Bladder 54, 55	Body feels stiff and heavy, stiff back and neck, arthritis of the knee.
Bladder 56, 57	Pain in calf and instep of foot, muscular cramps.

Benefits: sciatica, urinary and bladder problems, stiffness or pain behind the knee, muscular spasms, cold feet, late afternoon fatigue, leg stiffness or pain.

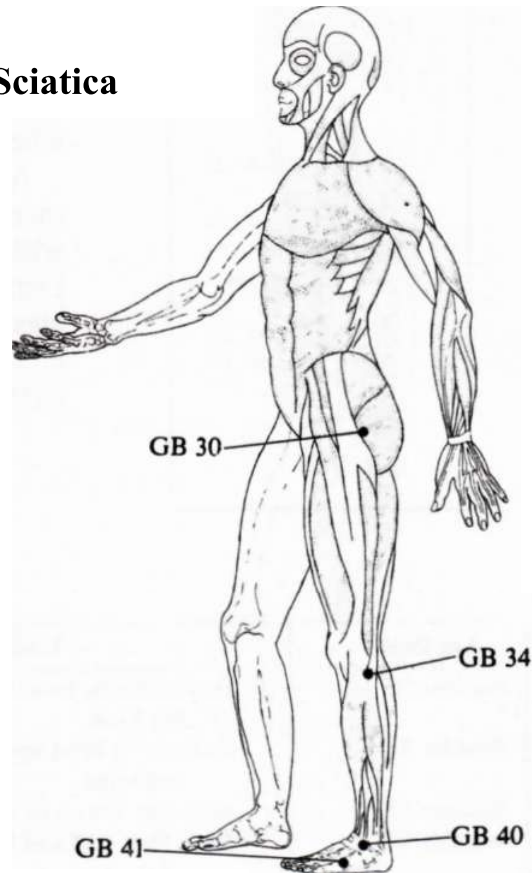
SCIATICA

Sciatica refers to a pain which runs down the back of the leg, beginning in the hip or buttock (s) region and traveling down the back of the thigh or along the side of the leg. This pain may extend below the knee and reach as far as the ankle or foot. Pain from sciatica can be intense enough to immobilize someone. Walking or bending in certain directions can be painful. Some people experience numbness in certain areas or pain in the lower back. Sciatic pain can be caused or aggravated by a lack of mobility in the pelvic region, lower back strain, excess frustration, injury to the lower back, causing a lumbar disc to protrude or a misalignment of the sacroiliac joint or lower lumbar region.

Acupressure along with gentle manipulations has proved to be effective for relieving as well as preventing sciatica. Pelvic movements which gently stretch the buttocks muscles and lower back area complement the tremendous therapeutics of Acupressure for relieving sciatic pain.

Self-Help Techniques for Sciatica

Lie on your back and place both fists underneath your lower back so that the knuckles are pressing into the lower back muscles. Hold for one minute. Then roll over onto your side, placing your fist or a tennis ball underneath the side of your buttocks. This point (GB 30) is one of the key points for relieving sciatica. The pressure on this point should create a pain that "hurts good." Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes. Readjust the pressure as the soreness decreases, pressing other tight points in the area. This should be followed by pressing three points: GB 34 (a muscle relaxant point) located on the outside of the lower leg below and in front of the head of the fibula, GB 40 in the indentation directly in front of the outer



ankle bone, and GB 41 between the fourth and fifth metatarsals, just below the juncture where the bones begin to narrow on the top of the foot.

The following Acu-Yoga exercises help to prevent sciatica. They should be practiced twice daily for best results. These exercises are also beneficial for people who already have sciatica and back pain. If you have sciatica, practice the following exercises* slowly and with awareness; don't push yourself beyond your limits. Be sure to utilize long, deep breathing:

- **Hip Rotations**, page 30
- **Lower Back Twists**, page 32
- **Spinal Twists**, page 42

- **Leg Swing:** Stand next to a chair. Place your left hand on the back of the chair. Shift all of your weight onto your left foot and swing your right leg backwards and forwards. Swing your leg freely like a pendulum. Make sure that you do not swing your leg to the side, as this will strain your back. After about thirty seconds, switch sides and swing the other leg. The purpose of this exercise is to promote greater circulation and mobility in the hip joint.



***IMPORTANT:** After practicing these techniques, allow yourself five to ten minutes of deep relaxation, lying on your back with your eyes closed. Remember, relaxation enhances the benefits.

Helping Someone with Sciatica:

Have the recipient lie on his or her back. Kneel close to the outside of the recipient's right thigh. Use your left hand to pick the leg up from underneath the knee as you support the recipient's foot with your right hand. Gradually bring the recipient's knee towards his or her chin. Instruct the recipient to breathe long and deep as you rotate the knee in a slow circular motion, first in one direction and then the other. Begin with small movements about one foot in diameter, then gradually increase the size of the circle. The intent is to stretch the tendons and muscles in the pelvic region and promote circulation in the sacroiliac joint. Finish the movement by *slowly* bringing the right knee over to the left side of the recipient to twist and stretch the lower back. Do not make any fast or jarring movements. Slowly stretch the muscles in the hips and lower back, then lower the right leg to the ground. Repeat the rotation on the left side, allowing three to five minutes per side. These rotations, along with the use of Acupressure on the hips and pelvis, are some of the most effective forms of alleviating sciatica, especially if it is chronic.

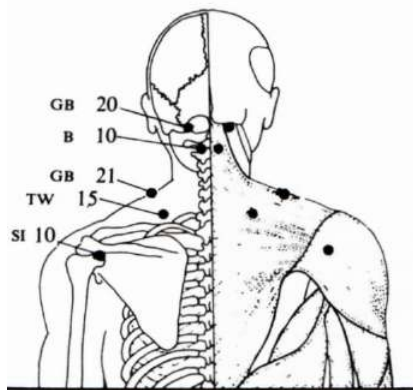


Shoulder and Neck Tension

Many of the Acupressure meridians travel through the neck and shoulder region. This is often the first area of the body where tension accumulates when someone is under stress* Anyone with pressures, such as deadlines, obligations and taxing responsibilities, usually suffers from shoulder and neck tension to some degree. A "pain in the neck" is often the body's literal response to these frustrating situations.

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The release of shoulder and neck points improves circulation and is especially good for cold hands, fatigue, irritability, shoulder pains and stiffness of the neck. Traditionally, these points are also considered useful for hypertension.



Acu Points	Traditional Associations
Triple Warmer 15	Shoulder and neck pain, arm and elbow painful and cannot be raised, stiff neck.
Gall Bladder 20	Alternately hot and cold, eyes foggy, nervousness, painful shoulder, rheumatism, stiff neck, upper parts of the body feel heavy or hot.
Gall Bladder 21	The major point where shoulder tension collects. Traditionally used to release stiff neck, regulate hyperthyroidism, and relieve rheumatism.
Bladder 10	Head heavy, spasm of the neck muscles, limbs and body not coordinated, throat sore or swollen.
Small Intestine 10	Muscular pain, numbness, swelling or arthritis in the shoulder—scapula region.

*Refer to page 24 for more information on neck pain.