

Clara Cohen: We're gonna do something a little bit different today, something we've never done before, and it's just to try something different because I like to test things out and to see what you think about this episode.

Now, if it's your first time here, just so you know, this is not our usual show. If you've been here for a while, let me know what you thought of this. You can tag me or DM me on Instagram or Facebook at AcuPro Academy, or you can leave a comment if you listen on Spotify.

As practitioners and students, we spend so much time deep into the Zang-fu theory, the points location, the clinical protocols, but sometimes it's incredibly valuable to take a step back and hear how these profound concepts are being discussed by those looking at our TCM world from the outside in.

I gave one of my most popular YouTube video about mental health and the best acupuncture point for mental health to two guests, and they've taken my core teaching in that video and had a really casual, insightful conversation about all these points.

And how they actually impact the mind and the body. I want you to listen to how they bridge the gap between the technical TCM side, like Liver qi stagnation and the human experience of mental health. It's a fresh perspective and I can't wait to hear your feedback on this.

At the end I will share exactly how this discussion came together, and I'm going to give you great tips on how you can utilize what I did today for your own TCM Learning journey. Are you ready? Let's do this.

Welcome to AcuPro, a show dedicated to making Chinese medicine and acupuncture easy to grasp and fun to learn. Hi, I'm your host, Clara Cohen. I support practitioners and students and like you in changing the world one patient at a time. My goal is to share my passion for TCM and empower you to achieve superior patient care.

I love to showcase the amazing benefits of acupuncture because after all, acupuncture rocks.

Speaker: Imagine carrying a trauma so heavy, like so entirely unresolved that it physically alters the cellular structure of your liver.

Speaker 2: Yeah. Or uh. A daily anxiety that literally remodels your digestive tract.

Speaker: Right? And according to the foundational text of traditional Chinese medicine, 70% or even more of all chronic physical illnesses are actually just unexpressed emotions wearing a physical disguise.

Speaker 2: It's a really staggering number when you sit with it.

Speaker: It totally is.

Yeah.

So today we are welcoming you, the learner, to a deep dive that completely dismantles that imaginary wall between your head and your body. We are. We're looking at insights from Clara, uh, a clinical practitioner from AcuPro Academy who details the top 15 acupuncture points used specifically to treat mental health issues.

Things like depression, insomnia, and you know, severe anxiety.

Speaker 2: Which is such a vital topic right now.

Speaker: Definitely. Okay. Let's unpack this because the core mission today isn't just to list off a bunch of pressure points. We need to understand the mechanism.

Speaker 2: Exactly the how is everything.

Speaker: Right? We need to figure out exactly how a tiny physical trigger. Like a needle, just a millimeter deep on the skin or firm pressure from your thumb can actually flip the human brain from a state of sheer panic into a parasympathetic rest and recover mode.

Speaker 2: And you know, bridging that gap between the abstract mind and the physical body is where this gets truly fascinating. In Western medicine, we've historically been very compartmentalized.

Speaker: Oh, for sure.

Speaker 2: The mind is treated by a therapist, the body, by a physician. And the two departments, uh, rarely speak, but in traditional Chinese medicine or TCM, the mind and the body aren't just connected. They're the exact same system.

Speaker: The exact same system.

Speaker 2: Right. So when we talk about how a tiny trigger on the skin affects the brain, we actually have to look at the body's connective tissue. Fascia.

Speaker: Okay. The fascia.

Speaker 2: Yeah. Modern research is starting to show that the pathways TCM identified thousands of years ago align remarkably well with planes of connective tissue that are densely packed with mechanoreceptors.

So when a practitioner needles a specific point, they are creating a microtrauma that sends a rapid electrical signal through that fascial network straight up to the central nervous system.

Speaker: Which basically commands the brain to release endorphins. Right?

Speaker 2: Exactly. It commands the brain to shift out of fight or flight.

Speaker: So it's not magic, it's a biological override switch. You're using the body's own physical wiring to sort of hack the emotional software. It's a great way to put it. But before we get into the exact coordinates of those switches, I wanna go back to that staggering statistic from the source. 70% of physical disorders stem from emotional trauma.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker: That implies a literal map where specific emotions live in specific organs.

How did ancient practitioners even. Begin to map that out.

Speaker 2: Well, by observing the physical aftermath of chronic emotional states over thousands of years, they realize that emotions aren't just fleeting thoughts. You know, they carry a physiological weight.

Speaker: They leave a mark.

Speaker 2: Right in the TCM framework. Every primary organ acts as a storage unit or a resonant chamber for a specific emotional frequency. So the spleen, for instance, is the organ that processes and holds worry and overthinking.

Speaker: Okay. Spleen is worry.

Speaker 2: And the liver is the physiological seat of anger, frustration, and irritability.

Speaker: Which makes sense.

You hear about people being bilious when they're mad.

Speaker 2: Exactly. Then the lungs hold our sadness and our deep grief. The heart is actually in charge of joy, but it's the organ that gets profoundly depleted by longstanding anxiety. Oh, and the kidneys, uh, they are where the body store is sudden shock and deep-seated fear.

Speaker: And the source material gets incredibly granular with this.

Like it goes way beyond broad emotions and links specific behavioral traits to organs.

Speaker 2: It really does.

Speaker: It mentions the gallbladder is tied to decision making or that paralyzing feeling of being completely stuck in life. The bladder is linked to jealousy. The small intestine dictates our ability to distinguish right from wrong.

Speaker 2: Yeah, the discernment aspect, right? And the large intestine is literally about the concept of letting go both emotionally and physically. But I have to admit, I struggled to wrap my head around one specific claim in the source.

Oh. Which one?

Speaker: It links the stomach to narcissistic or highly self-centered behavior.

Speaker 2: Huh.

Speaker: Are we really saying that like indigestion makes someone arrogant? Or is this just a metaphorical link? Because that sounds like a massive leap to me.

Speaker 2: I mean, it sounds like a leap until you consider how TCM views the architecture of the body's energy. It's not that a stomach bug turns you into a narcissist.

Speaker: Okay, good.

Speaker 2: It's about where your energetic center of gravity sits. The stomach is the literal physical center of your body. It's where you take in the outside world and make it part of yourself. Oh, I see. So if the energy there becomes. Profoundly stagnant, inflated, or obstructed, the individual's personality can begin to mirror that physical reality.

They become excessively focused on what feeds them, making themselves the absolute center of the universe. Precisely. The psychology follows the physiology.

Speaker: Let's say you have a teenager harboring deep unexpressed anger. That anger doesn't just evaporate because they ignore it. It festers.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker: And over years, that stagnant emotion literally changes the body's terrain. Creating a breakdown that manifests later in life as say, high blood pressure.

Speaker 2: Yes. And the continuous loop works in reverse too.

Speaker: How so?

Speaker 2: Well, if someone gets into a severe car accident and lives with chronic physical pain, that damaged tissue sends a constant stress signal back to the brain. Eventually that physical trauma settles into a depressive hopeless mental state. Right.

Speaker: 'cause they share the same network.

Speaker 2: Exactly. The body's pain dictates the mind's reality.

Speaker: So if you're listening to this right now, take a second to inventory your own body. When you feel overwhelmed at work or you have a fight with a partner, where do you physically feel it first?

Speaker 2: It's a really important question to ask.

Speaker: Do your shoulders tense up? Does your chest feel like there's a heavy weight on it?

Speaker 2: Mm-hmm.

Speaker: Because according to this map, your body is telling you exactly which emotional system is currently taking the hit.

Speaker 2: And once we identify where the hit is landing, we can intervene. Which brings us to the concept of digestion,

Speaker: right?

Speaker 2: We intuitively understand digesting food, but TCM places equal importance on the digestion of your thoughts. If you are obsessively overthinking, your cognitive digestion is failing.

Speaker: So if the body processes information the same way it processes a meal, how do you treat the indigestion of the mind? Like when someone is just bogged down by chronic worry?

Where do we start?

Speaker 2: We start with the primary digestive organs in TCM, the spleen and the stomach. The source highlights a phenomenal point called Spleen five.

Speaker: Spleen five.

Speaker 2: Yeah. In this framework, the spleen's job is to send clear energy up to the head so you can focus while also governing the energy of your physical muscles.

Okay. When someone is trapped in a loop of overthinking, they often feel a bizarre mix of mental exhaustion and physical lethargy. Spleen five is the specific target for that exact state.

Speaker: The source also mentions spleen five is incredibly effective for anxiety induced stuttering, which makes perfect mechanical sense now.

Speaker 2: It really does.

Speaker: If your mind is failing to digest a highly stressful situation, the energy gets stuck in the throat. It's an energetic traffic jam, and the physical output, your speech starts to glitch and stutter.

Speaker 2: Exactly. Clears the jam. Then we move slightly up the leg to spleen six, which is located just above the ankle.

This is a foundational point because it's a major intersection.

Speaker: Oh, like a transit hub.

Speaker 2: Right. To understand this, we need to talk about meridians. Think of meridians like a fiber optic network running beneath your skin.

Speaker: Not blood vessels.

Speaker 2: No, not blood vessels. They are distinct fascial pathways where information and electrical signals travel.

Spleen six is the crossing point for the spleen, liver, and kidney meridians.

Speaker: So by stimulating that single intersection, you were simultaneously sending a signal to downregulate worry in the spleen, anger in the liver, and fear in the kidneys.

Speaker 2: Yes. It's incredibly powerful, but its most critical function in treating mental health is that spleen six nourishes the blood.

Clara Cohen: Have you signed up to my weekly newsletter yet? It's completely free, and this is where I share exclusive content. I don't share anywhere else, including case studies, infographics, lots of pictures and images, and so much more you can benefit from through UTCM journey if you haven't joined yet, this is your day to do so. The link is below for you. Now let's get back to the episode.

Speaker 2: In Chinese medicine, there's a saying, blood is the material basis of the mind.

Speaker: The material basis of the mind. I love that,

Speaker 2: right? If you think of your mind as a kite, your blood is the string anchoring it to the ground. If you don't have rich circulating blood, the mind has no anchor. It drifts, it feels overwhelmed, anxious, and entirely ungrounded.

Speaker: Here's where it gets really interesting though. That brings us to a concept from the source that I found incredibly compelling, but it uses some very archaic terminology.

Speaker 2: Oh yeah, invisible phlegm.

Speaker: Yes. It talks about treating depression by targeting a point called Stomach 40 to clear out invisible phlegm.

Visible phlegm makes sense. We cough it up or we see it as plaque or cysts, but invisible phlegm.

Speaker 2: It sounds strange at first.

Speaker: Right? So I have to ask, what is the actual psychological reality of that? Are we talking about a literal physical substance in the brain, or is this just describing a specific state of mind?

Speaker 2: Well, it is a brilliant way of describing the phenomenology of severe depression and cognitive obstruction. Think about the physical properties of phlegm. It's thick, it's sticky, and it stops movement.

Speaker: Yeah. It plugs things up.

Speaker 2: When a deep depressive state settles in, it's rarely just a feeling of sadness.

It is an inability to rationalize. Have you ever tried to talk someone out of a deep depression?

Speaker: You can't.

Speaker 2: Exactly. You can't. They cannot think their way out of the hopeless mindset because their thoughts literally feel viscous, sticky, and slow. Wow. That cognitive stagnation is what ancient practitioners termed invisible phlegm.

Needling stomach 40 sends a signal to clear that energetic stickiness. Allowing clear fluid thought to resume

Speaker: that perfectly captures what brain fog feels like. It's an energetic blockage that mimics the suffocating properties of phlegm.

Speaker 2: It really is.

Speaker: And to treat that depression, the practitioner pairs stomach 40 with liver points.

Specifically Liver three,

Speaker 2: right? Because depression almost always features an underlying pattern of stagnant energy, specifically liver T stagnation. The person feels entirely stuck in their life.

Speaker: So liver three gets things moving.

Speaker 2: Liver three is the master switch from moving that stagnant energy. But here is where it gets volatile.

If that stuck energy sits there for too long, it starts to heat up under pressure and it transforms into anger,

Speaker: and that's where liver two comes in. The source uses this incredibly relatable example of the exploding volcano parent.

Speaker 2: Oh yes.

Speaker: Picture a parent who comes home from work, deeply exhausted and stressed.

The energy is stagnant. The kids start acting up and instead of handling it, the parent just erupts. They scream at everyone completely losing their temper, and then immediately feel like a monster afterward.

Speaker 2: We've all been there or seen it.

Speaker: Exactly That eruption is what TCM calls Liver yang rising. It is literally hot, agitated energy shooting straight up into the head,

Speaker 2: and liver two acts as a physiological cooling mechanism.

By stimulating that point on the foot, you are forcefully dragging that heat and blood flow away from the head, pulling it back down so the nervous system can cool off before you erupt.

Speaker: Okay. We're talking a lot about energy shooting up to the head or getting stuck in the center, but what happens

when the mind is racing so erratically, a mile a minute, that they feel entirely disconnected from reality. When the energy is pushed to the absolute extremes, we have to treat the absolute extremes of the physical body to fix a scattered, ungrounded mind. We don't look at the head. We look at the absolute bottom of the foot.

Kidney one. Kidney one. The clinical anecdote Clara shared about kidney one is unforgettable. She had a patient suffering from intense deafening mental chatter, so she needled the sole of his foot, which is a very sensitive area, super sensitive. The bottom of the foot is packed with nerve endings. So when the needle went in, the patient actually screamed and swore at her.

Speaker 2: Yeah, the reaction can be intense, but the parasympathetic shift was so immediate and the relief was so profound that he practically begged her to do the other foot he did. He became obsessed with it coming in and demanding Katie one because it was the only physical intervention that could turn off the noise in his brain.

It is a stark reminder that sometimes a delicate psychological issue requires a sharp, undeniable, physical interrupter to break the loop. Yeah. Kidney one is the only point on the body that physically touches the earth. When we stand, it acts like a lightning rod. It pulls all that frantic electrical static out of your brain and anchors it to the floor.

Speaker: That's such a great visual. Just draining the. Racing thoughts down through your body and out your feet, and there is a highly actionable takeaway for the listener here. If you are lying in bed and your thoughts are racing, get up. Draw a warm foot bath, and firmly massage the center of the soles of your feet.

Speaker 2: You are manually stimulating kidney one to drag the blood flow and the nervous energy down and out of your head.

Speaker: Sitting between the eyebrows is Yin tang. In Ayurvedic traditions, this is known as the third eye chakra.

Speaker 2: Yes. Very famous point.

Speaker: It's the ultimate point for calming, worry and inducing a state of almost blissful clarity. And I have to share this hilarious story from the source about it.

Speaker 2: Oh, Clara's story. It's so good.

Speaker: Yes. So the practitioner, Clara was back in acupuncture school and was incredibly anxious right before a massive exam. She and a classmate needed Yin Tang on each other to bring their heart rates down

Speaker 2: just to survive the test,

Speaker: right? And it worked so well that she took the exam, walked out, went downstairs and was casually ordering a tea at a coffee shop when the barista had to politely point out that she still had a giant acupuncture needle sticking straight out of her forehead.

Speaker 2: Which perfectly illustrates how profoundly these points alter your state of awareness.

Speaker: She totally forgot it was there

Speaker 2: because the parasympathetic shift was so dominant that she completely lost the physical sensation of wearing medical equipment on her face. She was entirely in the present moment.

That's

Speaker: incredible.

Speaker 2: This raises a really important clinical question. We've talked about grounding racing thoughts at the feet and calming worry at the head. But what do we do when the trauma isn't a racing thought,

Speaker: right? Like something heavier.

Speaker 2: Exactly. What if it's a deep, heavy. Repressed emotion that physically feels like a cinder block sitting on your sternum.

Clara Cohen: Before we continue with today's episode, I wanna share something that honestly feels like a big moment for me. If you've been following me for a while, you know I've always said no to all sponsorships. I've been approached many times, but I turned them all down because if I don't genuinely use a product or love it, I will never recommend it to you.

But today is different. I am super excited to introduce my very first sponsor. Drum roll, please, Jane App. I'm also a Jane ambassador, so this is a company I actually use and love. I am saying yes because I've used Jane for years in my own multidisciplinary clinic. Truly, it's the best practice management software and electronic medical record I've ever worked with.

Before Jane, we were using a clunky system that made everything harder than it needed to be. When we switched, the entire clinic felt the difference immediately. Jane is built by people who actually understand what it's like to be a practitioner running a busy practice. One of my favorite features is online booking.

There is nothing better than waking up and seeing patients, booking their own appointment while I was asleep. Your patients can book when it works for them, and the wait list feature fills last minute cancellations automatically. I love that. I used to spend so much time calling eight to 10 people just to fill up one spot.

Jane also automates the things we never enjoy doing, like intake forms, reminders, confirmation. It honestly feels like having an extra assistant handling all the moving parts so you can focus on what really matters, which is supporting your patients and being the TCM rockstar practitioner you truly are.

There are so many features I could talk about, but we would be here all day. If you're looking for a system that brings more ease, more clarity and calm into your practice, I truly recommend Jane. You can check it out at jane.app/demo, and because you're part of the AccuPro community, you can use my code AccuPro1MO one month, when you sign up to get a one month grace period on your new account.

The link and the code are also in the show notes below for you. Now, let's get back to today's episode.

Speaker: We have to move to the core. Grounding is great for anxiety, but it doesn't solve the deep grief or the panic attacks that make you feel like your lungs simply will not expand.

Speaker 2: For that, we target REN 17. It is located dead center on the breastbone. This is the master point for the respiratory system and the pericardium, which protects the heart

Speaker: right

Speaker 2: when someone is having a panic attack.

Their chest physically locks up. The fascia tightens, restricting the lungs needing, or applying deep pressure to ren 17 forces that connective tissue to release.

Speaker: Physically opening the chest cavity,

Speaker 2: yes, opening it up and calming the palpitations of the heart.

Speaker: But releasing that physical restriction has immediate emotional consequences.

The source detailed a case where a patient had REN 17 needle. And the emotional release was so violent that she proceeded to cry nonstop for two entire days,

Speaker 2: two full days,

Speaker: just 48 hours of uncontrollable sobbing. But when it finally stopped, she reported feeling like a crushing weight had been permanently lifted off her shoulders.

what does this all mean for us?

Speaker 2: When you use the physical body to unlock a door that has been bolted shut against trauma for years, whatever is behind that door is gonna come rushing out.

The physical tissue literally holds the emotional memory, much like a muscle knot holds physical tension. Wow. When you dissolve the knot, the pain has to process through the nervous system to actually leave the body.

Speaker: It requires such immense trust and empathy between the practitioner and the patient.

You are asking the body to process a backlog of trauma at intentionally buried to survive. We bury things in the most unexpected places, which brings us to the wrists.

Speaker 2: Yes, the wrists are key.

Speaker: The source details, several points here that act like master keys for locked emotions. Heart 7 known as the Gate of the Mind is a premier point for insomnia.

It's located right at the wrist crease on the key side. Alongside it is pericardium six. PC six

Speaker 2: and PC six is arguably the most valuable point for the listener to know for at-home use. If your anxiety tends to manifest as digestive knots, nausea, or nervous heartburn, PC six is your intervention.

Speaker: Oh, wait, really?

If you press firmly there, when you feel a wave of nausea or panic, you're ascending a direct signal up the median nerve to calm the vagus nerve.

Speaker 2: Exactly. But the real clinical magic happens when practitioners combine these wrist points into what is called the Buddha Triangle.

Speaker: The Buddhist triangle?

Speaker 2: Yes. This is a specific combination of Lung nine, heart seven, and PC six. The primary use case for this triangle is to treat patients who present as entirely flat.

Speaker: Flat, like emotionally flat. Exactly. These are people who are profoundly disconnected from their past trauma. They don't cry, they don't get angry. They just feel a pervasive, dissociative, emptiness.

That numbness is just a highly evolved. Defense mechanism.

Speaker 2: Yes, it is. And as the source points out, almost everyone is carrying some form of repressed trauma.

They don't consciously recognize the Buddhist triangle, doesn't force a violent release. Instead, it gently coaxes the nervous system to thaw out that frozen emotional state so the patient can actually begin to feel again.

Speaker: That's beautiful. And for incredibly specific psychological blockages, the map extends even further.

Speaker 2: Oh, absolutely.

Speaker: The source mentions gallbladder 24. Located on the rib cage, which is specifically utilized for people suffering from a deep lack of direction or purpose in life.

Speaker 2: Hmm.

Speaker: I found that fascinating. A physical point on your ribs to help treat an existential crisis.

Speaker 2: It's amazing.

Speaker: And kidney four down on the ankle, which is targeted for intense phobias like severe germaphobia or, or obsessive compulsive loops.

Speaker 2: When we pull back and synthesize all of this, what we are truly looking at is a highly sophisticated physical keyboard for the human nervous system. Whether it's showing a patient how to massage the on man point behind their ear to finally cure their insomnia, or utilizing the Buddha Triangle to thaw out repressed grief, acupuncture and acupressure offer a physical key to a mental lock.

Speaker: Yeah.

Speaker 2: For you, the learner, the ultimate takeaway here is empowerment. We live in an incredibly overwhelming world that constantly demands our attention, and it often makes us feel like our minds are spinning completely out

of control while our bodies are just, you know, helpless vehicles along for the ride.

But understanding that your body has this map, knowing that you can firmly press a specific point on your forearm. Literally alter the electrical signaling to your brain to slow your heart rate. That puts the control firmly back in your own hands.

Speaker: It completely revolutionizes the relationship you have with your own physical sensation.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker: You stop seeing your body as an inconvenience and you start seeing it as a communicator.

Speaker 2: Beautifully said.

Speaker: And that leads me to a final thought I wanna leave you with today. We spent this deep dive exploring how traditional ancient medicine maps every single emotion to a physical coordinate. Anger, living in the liver, worry, nodding up the spleen.

Deep grief, restricting the lungs.

Speaker 2: It's all connected.

Speaker: So what if the random physical ache or tension you're experiencing right now, that unyielding tightness in your jaw, that not under your shoulder blade or that weird persistent flutter in your stomach isn't just a physical issue at all? What if it's actually an unfelt emotion?

A forgotten fear or a boundary you didn't defend desperately knocking on the door of your physical body trying to get your attention before it turns into a chronic illness.

Speaker 2: That's a profound thought.

Speaker: The next time something hurts, before you just reach for painkiller to silence it. Take one second, breathe and listen to what your body is trying to tell you about your mind.

Clara Cohen: I hope you enjoyed that conversation.

Now, I promised you at the beginning that I would tell you how this episode came about and the truth might surprise you a little bit. These two hosts, you just heard their conversation, right? They are not humans. They don't exist. That was actually AI generated. What? Yeah. So let me walk you through what I did, and this was an experiment for me.

You might not agree with it, but I just want to see what happens and how they extracted the information I gave them. Okay? So I went to a. Tool called Notebook lm. It is a fantastic tool by Google Notebook, lm, I took one of my own YouTube video and I grabbed the link and I gave it to Notebook lm.

This YouTube video.

I'll have the link for you Below is on. 15 most powerful point for mental health. I uploaded it to notebook L and I click the audio file. It synthesized my expertise into that conversational format. I did not give it anything else. I wanted to share this with you for two reason. Patient communications.

Did you notice how they explain the calming effect of the point? It's a great example on how we can simplify our technical TCM language for our patients. The second reason is the future of learning. This is a tool you can use too. If you have a long webinar masterclass, a textbook chapter, or one of my YouTube video that is way too long for you and you don't have the time because it's tough to digest all the information.

You can use this notebook lm. Put the link of my video in there and click audio, and then once you create the audio overview, it'll help you study while you are commuting or at the gym, or going for a run. It is such a great tool to continue to help you listen to and enjoy learning. At TCM as practitioners, we are rooted.

In ancient wisdom, but we can definitely use modern tools to help spread that wisdom further. I'd love to hear what you thought about this experiments. Did you feel it was real? Did you think it was weird? Absolutely. Send me a message or leave a comment. If you're on Spotify, I know this is a big controversial subject, I just like to test things out.

Thank you for being open to exploring this new frontier with me. Keep healing, keep learning. Keep rocking it using TCM, and I'll see you in the next normal episode.

Speaker 4: Thank you so much for spending your time with me today. I truly hope you benefited from this episode, and I would love for you to share it with a friend that may benefit from it as well. Follow the show, live a review, and if you want more, go to my website, acuproacademy.com. I have tons of resources there with treatment protocols, case studies, free courses, and so much more.

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