

FATIGUE

As far as shiatsu is concerned, fatigue is the opposite of anxiety and the treatments, although presented separately, will have many similarities.

Feeling exhausted is so common that it has its own acronym, TATT, which stands for "tired all the time".

According to the Royal College of Psychiatrists one in five people feels unusually tired at any one time, and one in 10 have prolonged fatigue.

Usually, there is no medical reason for chronic tiredness. There's more chance of a medical reason for tiredness if there are other symptoms as well, such as heavy periods, weight loss, a change in bowel habits, hair loss or extreme thirst.

Fatigue may be a consequence of one of the following diseases:

- Coeliac disease
- Anaemia
- Sleep apnoea
- Underactive thyroid
- Diabetes
- Glandular fever

When fatigue is chronic and does not disappear with sleep or rest, it is called chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), which causes exhaustion and affects everyday life. CFS is also known as ME or myalgic encephalomyelitis.

Most cases of CFS are mild or moderate, but up to one in four people with CFS have severe symptoms.

These are defined as follows:

Mild: the person can for themselves, but may need to stay in bed and rest whole days

Moderate: the person may have reduced mobility, and may also have disturbed sleep patterns.

Severe: the person has significantly reduced mobility, and may also have difficulty concentrating.

It is not known what causes CFS.

TESTS

1. Medical history.

a) It is important to ascertain that the patient has seen a doctor to discard possible diseases.

b) Both depression and anxiety can cause chronic fatigue. So it is important to know if the patient is taking any medications or undergoing any other type of therapy.

Shiatsu is compatible with all these medications and with other therapies, but it **cannot be used as a substitute**.

c) Ask about sleep patterns and position.

2. Observation.

Breathing is almost invariably shallow. It may also be irregular, so we, as therapists, should pay attention to the breathing patterns of the patient. If we can manage to make breathing deeper and more regular, even if only temporarily, we are on the right track.

3. Palpation.

Energy levels are checked on the lower third of the abdomen. Press with your palm just above the pubic bone, stay for a few seconds and release suddenly. This part of the abdomen is very bouncy in people with high energy levels. If the patient lacks energy, it will hardly move or come back very slowly.

SHIATSU TREATMENT

1. It is important to gradually change the speed of our treatment. We should always begin at the level the patient arrives. If the patient arrives with low energy, we should begin very slowly and gradually increase our rhythm.

2. The first few treatments should not exceed 40 minutes. Sometimes, patients can feel much more tired if our session is too long. Gradually increase the time until sessions are one-hour long.

3. Manual and neck lumbar tractions.

4. Rotations can be very useful to increase depth of breathing, but **be very careful with the speed**.

Fast rotations will only cause anxiety in these patients.

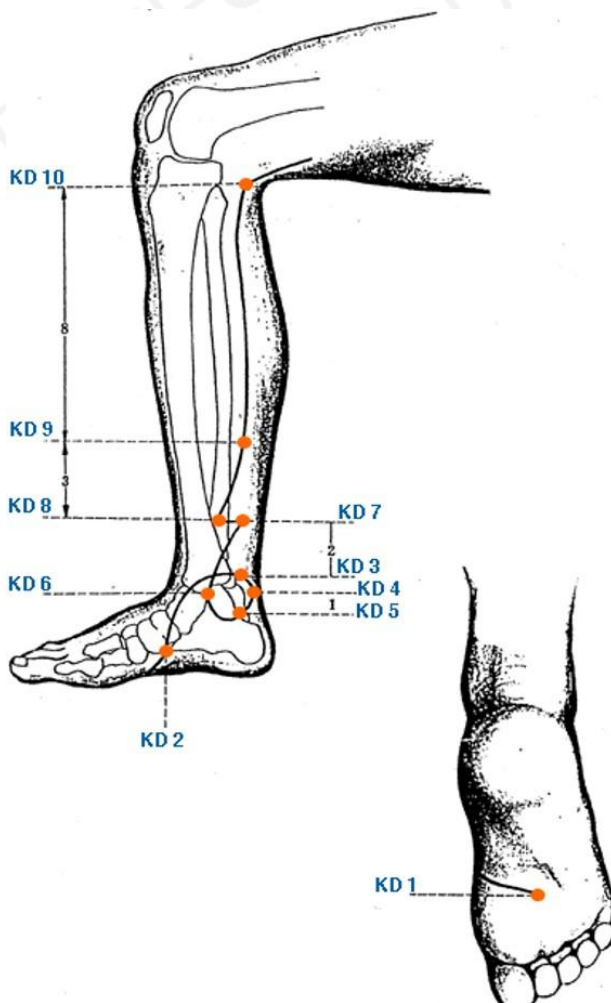
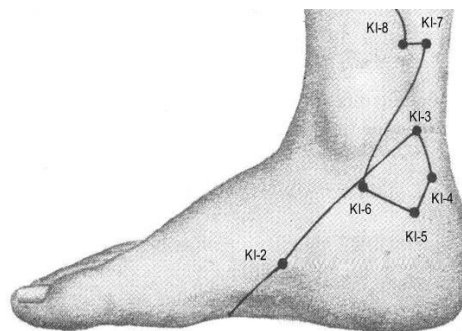
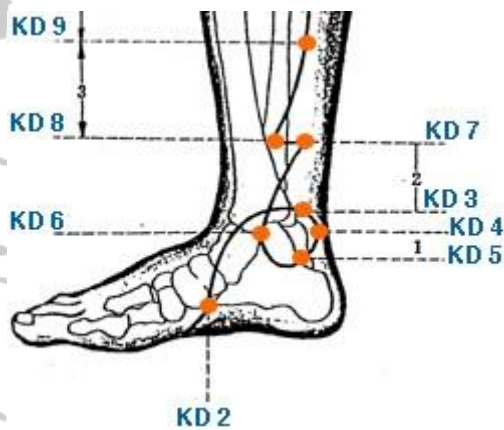
5. Sotai exercises. Any sotai exercises that deepen breathing. Sometimes it is very difficult to achieve, so during treatment we may use some of the hardest sotai exercises such as the windscreen wiper.

6. Working **slowly** on the abdomen should be part of all our treatments.

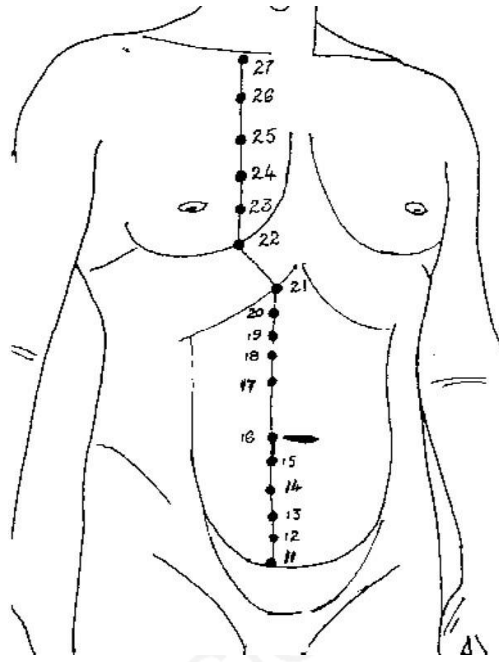
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7. According to TCM, energy comes from the kidney (inherited energy), the lung (the air) and the spleen (food).
Working on these three meridians to tonify may help boost energy levels.

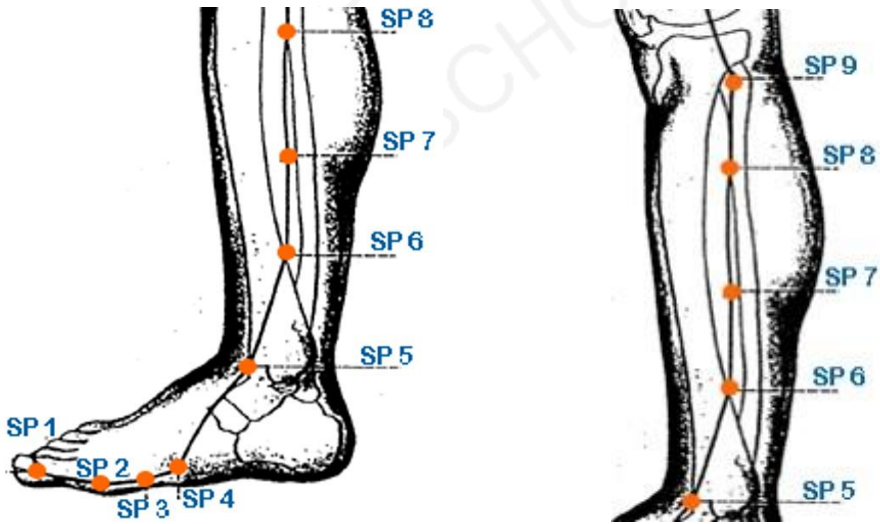
Kidney meridian (kidney 3, kidney 7)

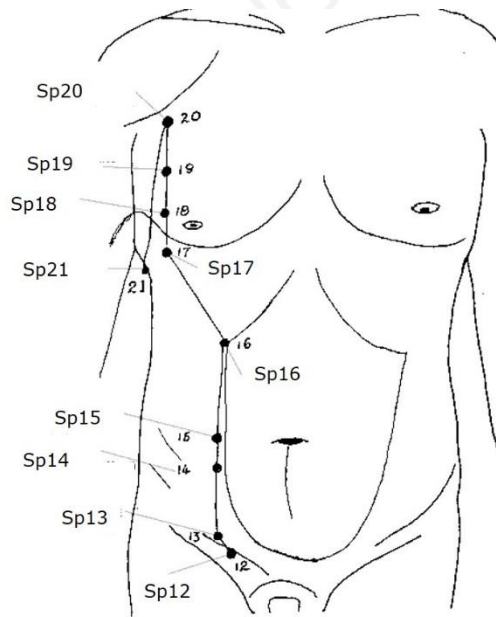
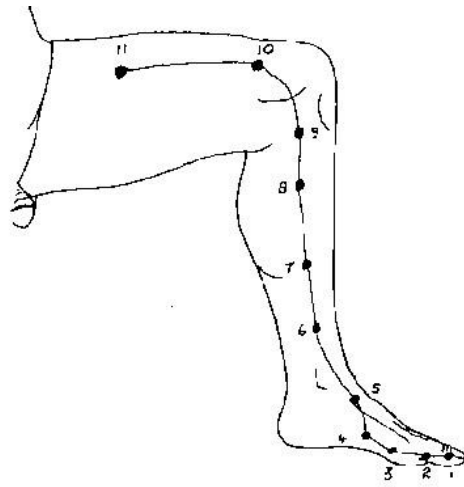


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Spleen meridian (Spleen 3, Spleen 2)





RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Eat often

A good way to keep up energy levels through the day is to eat regular meals and healthy snacks every three to four hours, rather than a large meal less often.

2) Exercise

Regular exercise increases energy. If patient is not accustomed to exercise, or has not done any for a long time, recommend a 15-minute walk to begin, and tell them to build up their physical activity gradually.

Any activity that teaches deep breathing, such as yoga or meditation , would be very useful.

3) Any sotai exercises which increase the patient's breathing.

4) Self-shiatsu on the abdomen.

With index, middle and ring finger. On 10 points. Pressing when breathing out. Ask patient to begin by doing it once. If it seems right, ask them after a few sessions to do it twice. It is best to do it in bed before going to sleep.

