

## Therapy

# Pressure wave acupuncture

## A new method, Part 2

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In our last issue, Dr. Heinrich Everke presented the principles of pressure wave acupuncture and the possibilities it offers for improving athletic performance. In the second part, he will present a selection of sensitive points (legs and back) and illustrate the technique using two sample treatments.

### Selected leg points

The famous ST 36 point, zusanli, was known to the ancients as a point for improving performance. It is located in the upper third of the anterior tibialis muscle. Stimulation of this point leads to an increase in endorphin production, better perfusion and loosening of the muscles of the lower leg. In traditional acupuncture, it was used to treat psychological and physical exhaustion and pain. SP 6 has the function of increasing perfusion of the lower leg and is often used in venous problems. It is located in an area around 3 to 4 finger breadths above the medial malleolus. To 'warm up', this area is carefully stimulated with pressure waves by massaging 2 to 3 finger breadths in the proximal direction using the device.

LR 8 is located on the medial side of the popliteal fossa between the insertion of the semimembranosus and semitendinosus muscles, at the medial epicondyle of the femur. SP 10 is located in the body of the vastus medialis in the thigh. Both areas are suitable for loosening the thigh musculature.

### Selected back points

Ideally, the points BL 23, BL 24 and BL 25 should be stimulated prior to competition in combination with their ventrally-located partners, the points CV 4 and CV 6, which are located 2 to 4 finger breadths below the navel.

The points BL 11, BL 13, BL 15, BL 17, each 2 finger breadths to the side of the spinal column at the level of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> thoracic vertebrae and BL 44 medial from the lower tip of the scapula, are used to both improve lung function and loosen the muscles of the upper back.

### Improving lung function

In previous studies, a large majority of patients suffering from obstructive lung disorders reported a significant improvement in their breathing difficulties when specific acupuncture points on the inner branch of the bladder meridian lateral to the thoracic spine (shu points of the thoracic organs) were stimulated. This improvement was reported with particular regularity by younger patients suffering from asthma. Older patients with chronic obstructive lung diseases appeared to gain less benefit from pressure wave treatment.

Many of the younger patients were better able to participate in athletic activity after treatment. It may thus be supposed that stimulating the acupuncture points could be a useful treatment for exercise-induced asthma in the sports medicine field. One explanation as to why pressure waves are more effective at dilating the bronchial musculature than acupuncture needles may be that the waves, like percussion massage, stimulate the appropriate receptors in the skin and in the superficial musculature. The appropriate stimulus for those receptors which influence the tone of the bronchial musculature is not the microtrauma provoked by an acupuncture needle, but rather repeated pressure impulses. The effect is stronger and more persistent the more precisely the area in which the pressure receptors are located is reached in depth. This is more achievable with pressure wave acupuncture than with massage or needles. Percussion massage of the back was also a valued traditional method for treating respiratory illnesses.

10 second stimulation of the BL 11, BL 13, BL 17 and BL 44 points has in particular proved to be of value. The force of the stimulation is calibrated in such a way that a clear feeling of pressure and

pulsation, but no pain, is experienced. In addition, it is also possible to insert needles at CV 17 in the middle of the sternum and LU 7 on the forearm, a little proximal to the point at which the radial pulse is palpated.

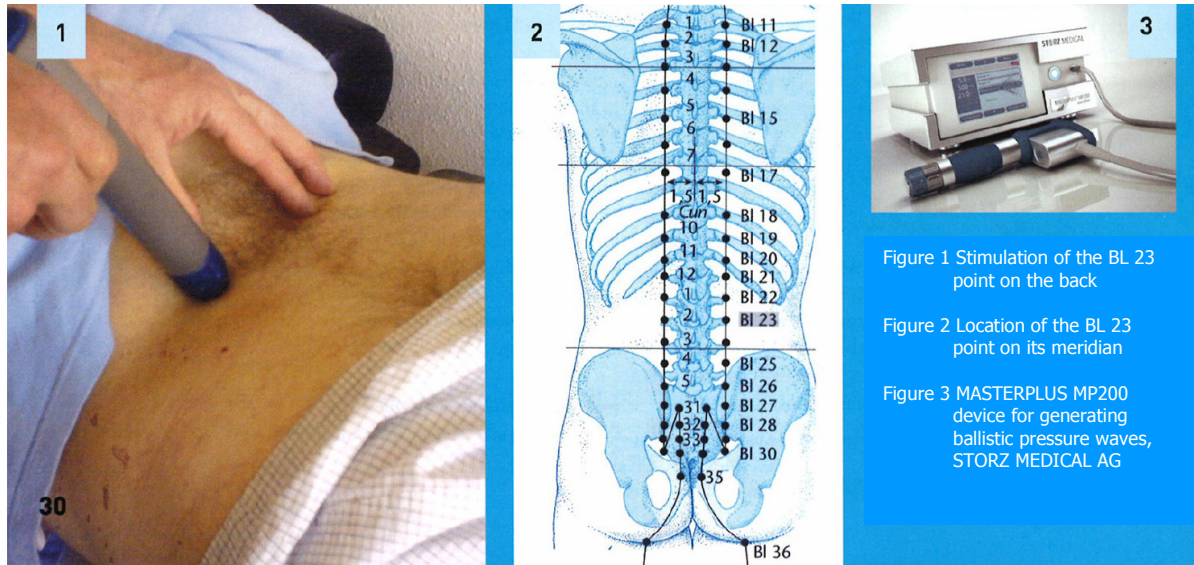


Figure 1 Stimulation of the BL 23 point on the back

Figure 2 Location of the BL 23 point on its meridian

Figure 3 MASTERPLUS MP200 device for generating ballistic pressure waves, STORZ MEDICAL AG

### Sample treatments

Loosening the leg and back musculature and 'opening' the lungs are of particular importance during preparations for rowing races. First, with the patient lying on his or her front, the points on the back are stimulated: GB 30 low on the gluteus maximus, BL 23, BL 24 and BL 25 lateral to the lumbar spine and BL 17 and BL 13 lateral to the thoracic spine. The patient then lies on his or her back and stimulates ST 36 and SP 6 on the lower leg and CV 4 and CV 6 below the navel.

The combination of points is very similar for cyclists. Here, too, the aim is to 'open' the lungs and then loosen the legs. For cyclists, there are also the points BL 58 in the body of the gastrocnemius muscle and the K 1 point on the sole of the foot. Due to its position, one would never insert a needle into the latter, but it is eminently suitable for stimulation using pressure waves in all states of exhaustion.

It is not advisable to include more than 6 areas in one treatment. Excessive stimulation tends to have a calming and fatiguing effect, rather than the desired performance improvement.

### → Summary

The stimulation of points and areas with pressure waves has a better effect on the pressure receptors in the superficial muscles than do either acupuncture or acupressure. There are a range of points and combinations of points which are suitable for stimulation during preparation for athletic activity. Pressure wave treatment of these sensitive points, which are known from centuries-old observations, is a valuable addition to the repertoire of measures for preparing for high-level athletic performance, as well as for achieving the fastest possible recovery following athletic exertion.

*References available from the author*

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His publications, presentations and lectures (national and international) deal with acupuncture and the wide-range of new therapeutic approaches which make use of it. He has been researching the use of ballistic shock waves in acupuncture since 2001. His work on this topic has been published in journals in Germany, the US and China.

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