

# Acupressure for Pain Relief in Labour

## Optimising your bodies beneficial responses

My use of acupressure began in 1992 when, as an acupuncturist with a young child, I was unable to guarantee being available to attend labours. Unable to locate any information on Chinese massage as an alternative, I simply instructed support people to use pressure on the acupuncture points I would use for pain relief in labour. Positive feedback from these women, their support people and midwives indicated acupressure had similar benefits to that of acupuncture and this led to a free booklet being published online in 1996. Subsequently the benefits of using acupressure for labour continue to be reported. With recent research reporting acupressure reduced the incidence of caesarean sections. <sup>(1)</sup> Acupressure has also been reported to significantly reduce the need for epidurals and caesarean sections when used as part of a complimentary antenatal intervention. <sup>(2)</sup>

From the feedback I have gathered my 'top tip's for using these acupressure points in labour would be:

- Your support people do not need to be good at massage to use acupressure! They just need to follow your feedback to apply firm continuous pressure at the level you find the most comfortable.
- It is beneficial to start using these points early in labour and experiment with which points you prefer
- The pressure and points you find the most useful are likely to change as you progress through labour
- If useful, you will notice beneficial effects during the contractions – if the pressure feels painful or irritating, they are not the right points for you at this time in your labour.

Below you will find links to short videos discussing the point location for each of the points and suggestions for their use during labour. Further information on using acupressure from 36 weeks as labour preparation and for assisting a medical induction can be found on the website at the bottom of this worksheet.

### For Pain relief in labour

#### GB 21



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjuQadgkY8>

#### BL 32



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmIHAIsoTyY>

#### The Buttock Point



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpuSAqPee1s>

#### KID 1



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry82TMPk7JE>

**Comb**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4RhGqBSP4k>

**LI 4**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKxBsmKDvSA>

### **For Specific Issues**

**If you need to promote cervical ripening**

**SP 6**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MdK61TSSKD4>

**If you need to establish contractions**

**LI 4**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKxBsmKDvSA>

### **For nausea**

This point can be held or stimulated with a 'sea sickness' band

**PC 6**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1tFzdEGT7A>

**If your baby is in a posterior position.**

Depending on access to the points BL 60 and SP 6 can be used by holding for a minute on each leg or one leg. BL 67 can be tapped for a minute with a fingernail or end of a pen to stimulate.

**BL 60**



**SP 6**



**BL 67**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QC0ucLYpjF8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-SHFxdSkRc>

**To assist the baby to move down into the pelvis and to encourage effective pushing**

**GB 21**



**Points useful to try in the transition stage of labour**

**KID 1**



**BL 60**



**LI 4**



To encourage effective placental release after the baby has been born

GB 21



LI 4



BL 60



For 'after pains'

SP 6



To encourage let down

GB 21



Further information and free videos for these acupressure points are available:

<http://acupuncture.rhizome.net.nz/acupressure/>

<https://www.udemy.com/acupressure-for-labour/?couponCode=ACUPRESSURE25>

Phone app: <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/acupressure-for-natural-pain/id604942630>

## References

- 1 Smith CA, Collins CT, Levett KM, Armour M, Dahlen HG, Tan AL, Mesgarpour B. (2020) Acupuncture or acupressure for pain management during labour. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2020, Issue 2. Art. No.: CD009232. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD009232.pub2
- 2 Levett KM, Smith CA, Bensoussan A & Dahlen HG. (2016). Complementary therapies for labour and birth study: a randomised controlled trial of antenatal integrative medicine for pain management in labour. *BMJ Open*, 2016 Jul 12;6(7):e010691. DOI: 10.1136/bmjopen-2015-010691.