

## Entry-exit points and their uses in acupressure

BY JOHN KIRKWOOD

**E**ntry and exit points are not much regarded in TCM. Deadman's *Manual of Acupuncture*<sup>1</sup> does not even note them as point categories. However in the Five Element tradition, the timely use of these points can make big differences to treatment outcomes.

Qi flows through the 12 organ meridians in a continuous circuit. It flows out of the exit point of one meridian and into the entry point of the next meridian in the Wei Qi cycle.

The entry point is the first point of the meridian with the exception of Large Intestine, which is LI4. The exit point is the last point of the meridian with the exception of Lung 7, Stomach 42, Kidney 22, Pericardium 8, Triple Heater 22 and Gall Bladder 41.

Where the entry-exit points are not the first and last points of the meridian, the remaining portion of the meridian distal to the entry or exit point is not an energy cul-de-sac; rather, the end points function as secondary entry or exit points.<sup>2</sup> For example, GB44 can be used to assist the movement of qi from the Gall Bladder to Liver meridian when GB41 is reluctant to open.

### Entry-exit blocks

Entry-exit blocks represent one of four potential blocks to treatment.<sup>3</sup> If work with a client is not holding, there may be a block to treatment and it is worth looking for a possible entry-exit block since these are the most frequently encountered blocks and the most easily treated. Acupressure is well suited to working with these blocks.

An entry-exit block arises when the qi is not flowing freely from one meridian to the next. The blockage of qi flow between an exit and entry point may be partial or complete.

Occasionally a whole meridian may be blocked. In this case, the entry and exit points of that same meridian are used.

Sometimes a block becomes evident early in treatment, but more commonly, the block occurs during the course of treatment and needs to be addressed in order for the treatment to proceed successfully.

### Diagnosing blocks

#### 1. Pulse

For those able to use the organ meridian pulses, the following can indicate a block:

- A relatively full pulse on one meridian and a relatively deficient pulse on the following meridian.
- Pulses on consecutive meridians do not change during treatment.
- A similar quality pulse appears on the pulses of consecutive meridians.<sup>4</sup>

#### 2. Signs and symptoms at the site

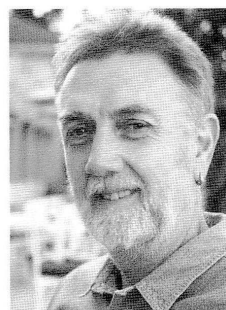
This is the best way of identifying blocks if the pulse is not used. Skin eruptions, swelling, pain, constriction, feelings of congestion, fullness or emptiness at the entry-exit points are all suggestive of a block.

#### 3. Signs and symptoms in the two organs or Elements

If a client shows manifest correspondences of two elements that follow each other, a block may be

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suspected. For example, if a client shows lack of shout, lack of joy, looks green, and smells scorched, this suggests a Triple Heater/Gall Bladder block.<sup>5</sup>

#### 4. *Treatment stops working*

If treatment suddenly becomes less effective or stops working altogether, an entry-exit block may be suspected. This is most common with Spleen/Heart blocks. Note that there are other causes of treatment not working.<sup>6</sup>

#### 5. *Unexpected treatment reaction*

A person who had been making good progress may suddenly experience a strong treatment reaction, or suddenly feel unwell for no apparent reason. This kind of block is caused when an existing block manifests itself as a result of the extra qi that is made available.

### Treating blocks

When a block is suspected, palpation of the points can confirm the diagnosis. Holding the points, the practitioner senses a numbness, deadness, emptiness and/or lack of movement either at the entry point, the exit point, or both.

Blocks may be bilateral or unilateral. To focus your intention, it is best to work on one side at a time. Begin by holding both entry and exit points. Stay with both if both are blocked. If only one is blocked, then hold the one blocked point.

Some points can take a long time to open, and even then reluctantly. When both the practitioner and client visualise pulling qi through, this can aid the process. If a point continues to resist, try holding the opposite end of that meridian. For example, if there is a Triple Heater/Gall Bladder block and GB1 is not opening, try holding GB41 to pull the qi through.

More than one treatment may be necessary to resolve a block. Even when the block appears to be resolved, it may reappear later in treatment.

Sometimes a whole meridian is blocked, in which case the entry and exit points of the same meridian are treated together.

### Two kinds of blocks

Since there are 12 organ meridians, there are 12 possible blocks. Six of these flow from a meridian into its partner meridian (e.g. Gall Bladder to Liver). The other six flow from a meridian of one Element to a meridian of another Element (e.g. Triple Heater to Gall Bladder).

The first type of block (meridian to partner meridian) can be more effectively treated by using the Luo connecting points of the paired meridians. In the example above, we could hold GB41 and LV1, which is useful. But a more efficient way of working is to hold the connecting points of GB37 and LV5, and particularly the latter since it is the deficient meridian.

The second kind of block (meridian of one Element to a meridian of another Element) can only be treated at the entry-exit points. This kind of block occurs more frequently than that between meridians of the same Element.<sup>7</sup> It is the greater block to treatment and tends to produce the more serious symptoms.

These six are:

- Large Intestine to Stomach (LI20 – ST1)
- Spleen to Heart (SP21 – HT1)
- Small Intestine to Bladder (SI19 – BL1)
- Kidney to Pericardium (K22 – PC1)
- Triple Heater to Gall Bladder (TH22 – GB1)
- Liver to Lung (LV14 – LU1)

The entry-exit points of the yang meridians are located on the face. All the entry points on the face are at the eye. The entry-exit points of the yin meridians are located on the chest.

Some signs and symptoms of these blocks that I have encountered include:

LI-ST	Spots, rashes at LI20, nasal congestion, sinusitis, difficulty smelling; spots or rashes below the eye, eye spasms, pain or congestion at eye.
SP-HT	Fullness of the chest, palpitations, pain in ribcage, depression, fatigue, pain in axilla, spots, rashes etc. at the site of the points, appetite disorders.
SI-BL	Jaw tension, eye problems, tear duct issues, eye pain, headaches.
KD-PC	Tension or pain at side of sternum or in breast. Rashes, spots, lumps at site of points or in the intervening space. Depression, fear, lack of joy for life.
TH-GB	Frontal and temporal headaches. Vision problems, tics, inability to see the way forward or take action.
LV-LU	Breathing difficulty or constriction, fullness of ribcage, emotions of grief and anger, often suppressed, feeling of being tired and wired.

Note also that symptoms increasing at the time of day when the energy is highest in the meridian(s) can also point to a block. For example, waking consistently at 3am is a possible indication of a LV-LU block.

## ENTRY POINTS

Meridian	Point	Location
Lung	1	6 cun lateral to the midline in the first intercostal space
Large Intestine	4	In the webbing between thumb and index finger at highest point of the muscle when thumb and finger are closed
Stomach	1	Below the pupil at the orbital ridge
Spleen	1	Medial side of the corner of the nail of the big toe
Heart	1	In the depression at the centre of the axilla
Small Intestine	1	On the ulnar side of little finger at the corner of the nail
Bladder	1	In the inner corner of the eye, just above the tear duct
Kidney	1	In sole of foot between second and third metatarsals, in a hollow formed when the foot is plantar flexed
Pericardium	1	1 cun lateral and slightly superior to the nipple in the fourth intercostal space. On women, use PC2 instead.
Triple Heater	1	On the ulnar side of the ring finger at the nail bed
Gall Bladder	1	In a depression 0.5 cun lateral to outer canthus of the eye
Liver	1	Lateral side of the corner of the nail of the big toe

## EXIT POINTS

Meridian	Point	Location
Lung	7	1.5 cun above the wrist in a groove on the radius
Large Intestine	20	Slightly lateral and superior to the outside base of the nose
Stomach	42	On top of the foot, at the head of the second and third metatarsals, 1.5 cun distal to the crease of the foot
Spleen	21	On the mid axillary line in the seventh (or sixth) intercostal space
Heart	9	On the radial side of the little finger at corner of the nail
Small Intestine	19	At the tragus of the ear, in a depression with the mouth open
Bladder	67	On the lateral side of the little toe at the corner of the nail
Kidney	22	In the fifth intercostal space, 2 cun lateral to the midline
Pericardium	8	Between the second and third metacarpals at the point where the middle finger lands when a loose fist is made
Triple Heater	22	0.5 cun anterior to the upper border of the root of the ear, on the posterior border of the hairline of the temple
Gall Bladder	41	Slightly distal to the junction of fourth and fifth metatarsals
Liver	14	On the mamillary line, in the sixth intercostal space

## References

- 1 P Deadman, M Al-Khafaji & K Baker, *A manual of acupuncture*, Journal of Chinese Medicine Publications 1998
- 2 F Mann, *Acupuncture*, Vintage 1973, p. 120
- 3 A Hicks, J Hicks & P Mole, *Five element constitutional acupuncture*, Churchill Livingstone 2004, p. 227.  
The other blocks are Aggressive Energy, Possession and Husband-Wife imbalance.
- 4 Hicks 2004 p. 251
- 5 Hicks 2004 p. 252
- 6 *ibid*
- 7 LS Jarrett, *Clinical practice*, Spirit Path Press 2003, p. 79