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## Traditional Stress Therapies

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Stress can be managed through several traditional therapies that are proven to be effective in stress relief and recovery. Among the different traditional stress therapies, the three identified effective therapies include massage, acupuncture, and acupressure.

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## Massage

One of the oldest ancient healing arts, massage is founded on the principle of relaxing the body to decrease mental anxiety. India's ayurvedic tradition contains the earliest practice of massage therapy, claiming that this kind of therapy provides both physical and emotional relaxation for all individuals.

Eastern civilizations have utilized massage therapy for centuries, giving rise to the famous oriental massage. For better therapeutic effects, western people modified the eastern massage methodology.

Prolonged or excessive stress often makes the body muscles over worked, causing stiffness, muscle spasms and soreness. This leads to feeling of tiredness and fatigue. In addition, lactic acid tends to accumulate further in the muscles, causing injury to skeletal muscle cells. All these and more result to feeling of exhaustion, and later decrease the energy, capacity and motivation of the person to manage the stress.

Massage is applied through the use of hands and other body parts to locate areas of high

tension and relax these body areas by putting the right amount of pressure.

Many clinical studies have proven the rejuvenating effects of massage, such as the following:

- Improved blood and fluid circulation all over the body
- Increased oxygen flow
- Enhanced elimination of body wastes
- Improved muscle tone
- Feeling of relief, relaxation and peacefulness

There are different types of massage therapies to manage stress. The popular ones being Traditional Massage, Shiatsu, Reflexology, Polarity, Swedish massage, Sports Massage, Manual Lymph Drainage, Deep Tissue Massage, Rolfing and Trager.

## Acupuncture

Referred to as the most common Chinese therapy, acupuncture is one of the stress therapies <sup>[1]</sup> that relieve and control pain, a common symptom experienced by people who are exposed to constant excessive stress, especially at work.

Acupuncture rests on the principle that the body must be kept in harmony and balance through the facilitating of “life energy” in it, also called as “chi”. Stress is believed to disrupt this balance and harmony, and impedes the normal flow of chi, so acupuncture is recommended by many therapists.

Acupuncture specialists insert needles into acupoints of the body in their attempt to manage the pain experienced by the person. According to them, this procedure aims to facilitate the restoration of chi distribution, allowing pain and stress relief.

To prove the effectiveness of this traditional stress therapy, the World Health Organization (WHO) conducted research and identified the following stress-related disorders as having been successfully treated by way of acupuncture:

- Headache (particularly migraine)
- Post-stroke paralysis
- Trigeminal neuralgia
- Nocturnal enuresis or bed wetting
- Meniere’s disease
- Neurogenic bladder dysfunction
- Sciatica
- Irritable Bowel Disease
- Anxiety-related problems

## Acupressure

Defined as the needle-less version of acupuncture, acupressure is the Chinese healing art that uses finger pressure instead of needles in facilitating the restoration of energy flow throughout the body. This is more convenient than acupuncture as it can be done wherever you are. Acupressure, although not found as effective as acupuncture, has achieved

recognition for treating stress symptoms and minor stress-related disorders such as:

- Body pain
- Headache and migraines
- Menstrual problems
- Sleep problems
- Anxiety-related problems
- Digestive problems

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**Links**

[1] <http://www.lifepositive.com/mind/psychology/stress/stress-management-techniques.asp>