

# Stress Relief

Everybody suffers from stress from time to time, given the tremendous challenges, options, and responsibilities in our busy lives. Stress depresses respiration and causes shallow breathing, which can lead to irritability, frustration, and fatigue. Many people turn to unhealthy habits like smoking, overeating, and excessive drinking to counteract stress. Instead, you can use the following acupressure routine to alleviate everyday tensions.

## Shoulder & Neck Tension Relief

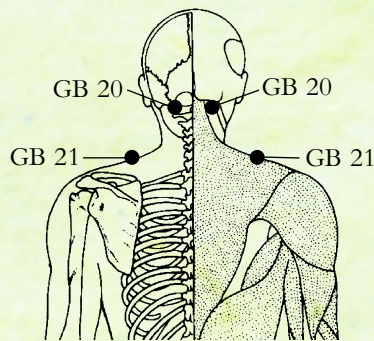
This 10-minute self-care routine is shown sitting, although you can also practice these techniques lying down.

### Step 1

**Shoulder Grasp:** Curve your fingers, of both hands, and place them on the tops of your shoulder muscles (GB 21), close to the base of your neck. Gradually apply firm pressure directly on to your shoulder tension. Simply let the weight of your arms relax forward, keeping your fingers curved like a hook. Sink deeply into the muscles as they soften and relax. Hold for one minute as you take slow, deep breaths. Then let your hands relax in your lap. Gently shrug your shoulders up and down to encourage them to relax.

### Step 2

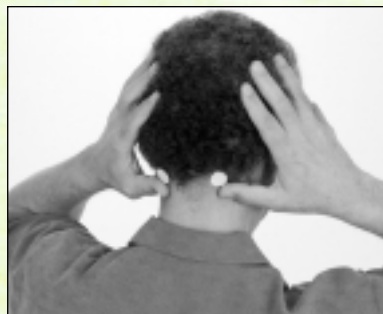
**Neck Press:** Interlace your fingers behind your neck, and let your head hang forward, with your elbows close together, pointing down toward your lap. Inhale deeply, raising your head as you stretch your elbows out to the sides; let your head tilt back. Exhale as your head relaxes forward and your elbows come close together in front of you. Repeat this exercise for two minutes; then let your hands float back into your lap. Keep your eyes closed and deeply relax for one minute.



### Step 3

#### **Press GB 20:**

Close your eyes, and place your thumbs on GB 20 (underneath the base of your skull in the indentations that lie about three inches apart). Apply firm pressure for one minute.



### Step 4

Bring the palms of your hands together. Close your eyes, placing your middle fingertips between your eyebrows on GV 24.5 (in the indentation above the bridge of your nose). To collect your thoughts and rejuvenate yourself, breathe slowly and deeply for three minutes as you focus your attention on the gentle touch of this point. Deeply relax in a chair or on your back, eyes closed, to gain the full benefits.