

How Jin Shin Do® Acupressure is Useful for Massage and Bodywork Therapists

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Why might massage or bodywork therapists benefit from adding Jin Shin Do® Acupressure to their repertoire of skills? Since adding Jin Shin Do® into my practice in the 1990's, I have discovered many reasons for myself and heard many more from my clients and students.

Clients often report feeling deeply “heard,” “respected,” and “met” during a Jin Shin Do session, through JSD’s presence of touch and awareness— and this is a special experience. “Such a delicious state of mind,” said one woman.

When the presence of touch is focused on a tense point within or between muscles, that helps bring the client’s awareness into the center of the tension, and sometimes they say it “hurts good.” While the point is held precisely with a direct pressure that is comfortable for the client, s/he can more easily feel into the tension and relax from the inside, while being open to any sensations, feelings, colors, images, words or phrases that might come up around their tensions.

While holding a tense point, if you also hold a related “distal point,” the pain at the tense point lessens. This is part of the magic and effectiveness of JSD. Even though the distal points are often very distant, holding them helps the tension at the local point release more easily. This is because the “local” and “distal” points are generally on the same meridian and are functionally related. The “meridians” are lines of interconnected points, which are located within the connective tissue, in interfascial spaces. (“Fascia” is a thin layer of connective tissue covering, supporting or connecting muscles or inner organs.)

For more information, see: *"JSD Acupressure: Magic or Science,"* by Iona Marsaa Teegarden, M.A., JSDF Director, under *Articles on Jin Shin Do® Acupressure* at www.jinshindo.org.

Pain changes to pleasure as the tension gradually relaxes and releases, as though it’s melting. This “release” is a bodymind phenomenon, which is another part of JSD’s magic. The release of both physical tension and distressed feelings is a relief. Relief is a much underrated and delightful feeling.

10 Reasons for learning how to use

Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure® techniques in massage or bodywork sessions:

1. A big reason is reduced “wear and tear” on your body, which can add years and more enjoyment to your practice of massage. If you can do any kind of bodywork, you can do Jin Shin Do. To explain why requires a big space, because it amounts to describing the mechanics of JSD.

- In JSD Acupressure, **the practitioner is comfortably seated**, and the client’s body is used to minimize the practitioner’s hand and finger tension. For example, the client may be asked to breathe into the tense area. As s/he does so, the practitioner lightens the pressure while maintaining contact with the point. Then as the client exhales, the practitioner leans into the point.

- **Body dynamics are emphasized.** Examples include having your (lower) arm straight instead of

cocking your wrist; and wrapping the client's arm or hand or leg or foot with your hand to support your fingers (*and* the client's limb).

Iona explains: "There is a comfortable way to hold any point. The more comfortable you are, the stronger your pressure will feel to the client. If you locate the points accurately and hold them at the optimum angle, the client will feel like you are exerting more pressure than you actually are. When you feel some release in a point in a muscular area, just *follow the tension as it releases.*"

- A "local point" in a tense area is held together with "**distal points**" that, though distant from the problem area, **help it release more easily** and deeply, as described above. A massage therapist who is a JSD student said, "You are doing more than 'just massage' while actually 'working' less!"

- People are often amazed at how simple pressure on a point distal to their problem area can bring relief, sometimes for things they've been told to "just get used to" because "there is no treatment." For example, points on the legs (#44 and 13) can help relieve tension and migraine headaches.

2. **Jin Shin Do® sessions can increase clients' access to emotional components and ease the processing of addressing underlying causes of their bodymind tension through the use of verbal Body Focusing techniques**, which are taught throughout the JSD training. As you use these simple techniques, tense points release more easily as clients learn how to move out of their heads and into their bodies, accessing feelings and inner wisdom. These simple techniques of being present with your client and involving them in the release process are another reason clients report feeling deeply "heard," "respected," and "met" during a Jin Shin Do session.

3. **JSD classes teach a set of skills that you can offer to your clients for their self-care**, as well as use for your own self-care. These Qigong breathing meditations and stretching exercises are "low tech." They are relatively uncomplicated, yet powerful. Almost anyone can do the Pal Dan Gum exercises with which we start JSD classes"— either standing or sitting on a chair or in a wheelchair. These—"Eight Silken Movements" can help clients release tensions, including along the spine, and can increase their proprioception, balance and centeredness (among other things!).

You can also teach clients how to hold points to help themselves and their family members — to great effect.

4. **Being skilled in JSD Acupressure broadens the range of reasons clients have to come and see you.** Clients can come for relaxation, stress reduction, release of muscle tension, balance of Qi (energy), discovery of the bodymind connection and increased awareness of holding patterns in their bodies.

5. **Clients love this work!** People who have had years of massage have said that they were never as relaxed by massage as they are during and after a JSD session.

6. **Jin Shin Do is safe, and it is easy to offer to people almost anywhere, anytime.** JSD is very accessible because people don't need to remove clothing or lay down. We've done JSD "work" (held points) with people in the middle of parks, on airplanes, and in theaters, restaurants, schools, recreation centers, sports events, etc. My favorite place to teach was at the local hospital because people would come to classes out of desperation and all I had to do was show them a few helpful points and they were hooked!

7. **Jin Shin Do can help increase your success** with things that massage training may not have equipped you to deal with, or with which you have had limited success. The list of common problems for which acupressure can offer help covers a wide spectrum, from tension headaches to low back pain; from difficult breathing to insomnia and nausea and more.

For more information, see: "Acupressure Research" by Senior Authorized JSD Teacher/Practitioner Deborah Valentine Smith.

As a massage therapist who is a JSD student said, "Massage is great for relaxation, but my clients have

so many more issues that they are seeking assistance with and JSD is helping them.”

Of course, clients with such problems *must* be under a doctor’s care, because even common problems can be symptoms of serious diseases that need medical attention, and the use of acu-points is only an *adjunct* to Western medicine.

8. The experience of giving a Jin Shin Do treatment is very meditative for the practitioner, so **it’s relaxing for you as well as for the client.** In fact, many JSD students and practitioners feel like they *receive* a session while they are giving one. They often say that they feel refreshed and more energetic after *giving* a JSD session.

9. **Students and practitioners also report increased access to and depth of their intuition.** This occurs not only through touch, but also through the “with-nessing” aspect of Jin Shin Do and its use of Body Focusing techniques.

10. **There are many ways to include JSD into your practice.** Most massage therapists who study JSD use the highly effective 5-step JSD Neck/Shoulder Release at the end of massages. It is easy to do. The client lies comfortably on his or her back, and you sit comfortably at the head, your arms supported by the table, holding 5 points bilaterally & consecutively.

NOTE: If you keep taking classes and become a Registered Jin Shin Do® Acupressurist, you are listed in the printed JSDF International Directory and in the online directory at www.jinshindo.org.