

"The posture of the mind and body for acupuncture"

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Acupuncture is an art whose goal is to heal diseases by moving and balancing Ki through the use of needles. In order to reach that goal, one needs various types of practice and training. When it comes to the needling, the first step is perhaps learning a correct posture.

The needling stance can be discussed from two dimensions.

First, you might consider needling posture in the physical sense, such as stance, breathing technique, and the position of the center of gravity.

Second, there is a certain frame of mind or consciousness the practitioner should have when needling. For instance, the practitioner's consciousness must be clearly different when applying tonification and dispersion techniques. To move, Ki, the practitioner's frame of mind and physical posture are very important. Though mind and body cannot be separated, in this article, let us begin by discussing physical posture first.

If acupuncture works only because of the stimulation generated by the penetration of the patient's skin by the metallic needle, there should be no need for the discussion of the proper needling posture. Yet, based on the collective experimentations by the Hari Society using the Ki feedback methods by pulse, the inner workings of acupuncture are not so simple. We have discovered that at the moment the practitioner changes his/her posture, even though the practitioner is only placing his/her *Oshide* Protecting hand on the patient's acupuncture point without needle, the patient's pulse, skin condition, and breathing change without fail. Sometimes, the observer can detect those changes even if the practitioner's hand is out of contact with the patient. This phenomenon suggests that there is something already at work even before the needle, as the primary acupuncture instrument, contacts a point and Ki starts moving.

Why does this occur, and what is at work?

With our commonsense, we can easily understand that there are postures that would lead the acupuncturist to health and there are also postures that would make him/her unhealthy. For instance, if you are in the habit of working in a slouching posture or always working at the desk in a stooped over position, it will oppress your internal organs over a long period of time. Moreover, it can be easily understood that this kind of habitual bad posture will eventually result in disorders either in the form of pain, or abnormal curvature of the spine.

The relationship between posture and health has been studied since ancient times, and we have no trouble finding various ways to study it. For example, you can take courses on Ki Ko exercise, Aikido, Yoga, Tai Chi Chuan, Alexander Therapy, etc. These specific examples are the ones that I, myself, have studied, and there are many more. However, the point is that in both Asian and European traditions, there are many disciplines whose teachings are designed to benefit health and longevity, and essentially their teachings have to do with learning the correct posture for each stance or technique.

To put it differently, by changing posture, the acupuncturist's Ki can change to the type of Ki that can heal or the Ki that causes illness, and this change will be directly transmitted to the patient. I don't mean to rub it in, but I'd like to stress that this change in Ki occurs within the acupuncturist. The acupuncturist's hand may or may not be in contact with the patient's body, so we have to assume that it

is the Ki that's being emitted by the acupuncturist that influences the success or failure of the patient's healing process.

It is easy to understand the reason why the good needling posture is important, and it is also easy to understand how to make a good posture in-concept. However, to actually master the proper needling posture and incorporate it in your everyday practice can often take a long time. In order to address this problem, we use the Ki feedback methods by pulse, which makes it possible to learn the correct "Ki-generating needling stance" in a very short time.

We have developed our training method for mastering the correct needling posture from our experiences as Hari instructors. So, in the following section, let us review each step and the criteria involved. For actual practice of the needling stance, you should check your performance of each step by using Ki feedback methods by pulse.

As the most basic rule, is your natural self?

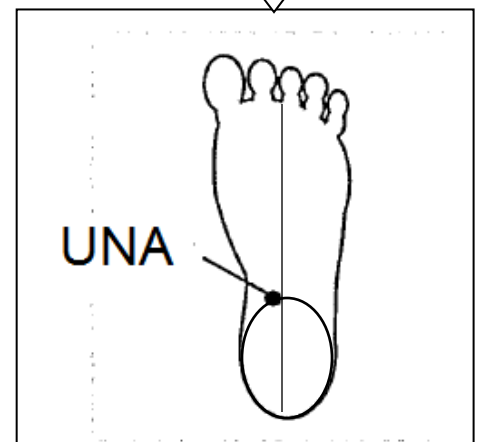
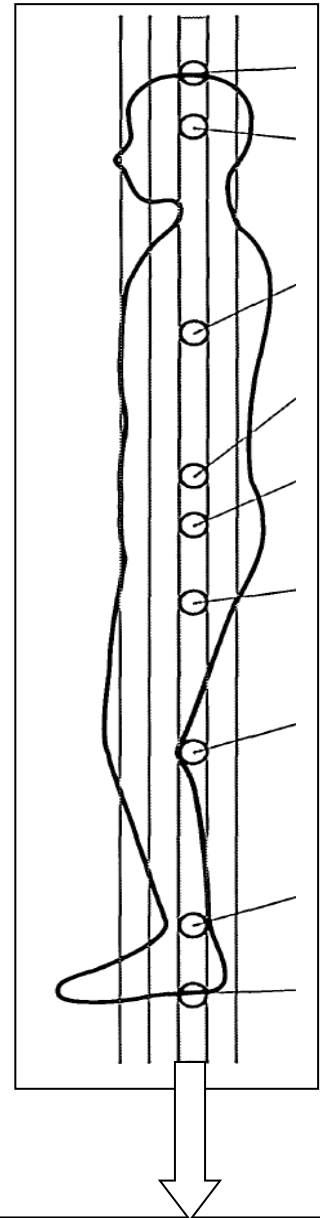
Do nothing. Don't attempt anything. Don't try to "generate" or "emit" Ki. Don't think that "I" will "heal" the patient. Don't tinker with the patient's body too much. Simply be natural.

The correct posture:

- (1) is a posture or action (form) in which your mind and body can utilize its capacity,
- (2) is a posture in which there are no parts of the body strained or stressed,
- (3) should have no excess tension or over-relaxation,
- (4) is a posture you can naturally hold for a long duration.
- (5) You can naturally breathe deeply,
and also you will feel fine and your mind would be at ease.
- (6) The correct posture can create a state in which your spirit feels joyful.

Making the needling posture

- A) *Spread your feet slightly wider than your shoulder width. It varies with the height of the treatment table, but this is the basic distance between your feet.
- B) *Sustain the weight of your body at the center of each foot. The center of the foot can be interpreted as UNA-point. Stand at UNA and also breathe through UNA. Be conscious of them.
- C) *Slightly bend, relax your knees. You only need to bend a little. Again, depending upon the height of the treatment table, you'll have to adjust how much to bend.
- D) *Place the center of gravity of your whole body at Tan Den (or "Dan Tian" in Chinese--located in area around CV-4). This might be little difficult. To do it correctly, move your pelvis slightly posterior and



upward and adjust the position by moving your pelvis forward again to find the best position for you. Find the position in which you can hold the most strength in the Tan Den. When you do. You will feel as if a small sphere has been created in the Tan Den. Point the posterior portion of your pelvis (coccyx) slightly upward, so that your Tan Den is pointing at the ground at about 20 degrees, so that you can naturally withhold Ki energy (as if you are pumping air into a balloon situated in Tan Den) not from muscular strength, but from the natural consequence of your posture itself. Memorize this position. Your abdomen must not be tense.

It should be relaxed and supple. Place your finger on CV-4 and confirm the concentration of the energy.

- E) *Make an energetic triangle with your UNA and Tan Den in the lower half of your body
- F) *Pullback your shoulder and scapula with opening upper chest with pulling your CV-17 upper-front.
- G) *For your upper body, at first correct your stoop, then your mouth should be closed without clenched teeth, and be conscious of GV-20. Connect the healing universal Ki (healing type of Tian Ki) to your GV-20 as if you are connecting a rope brought down from heaven to your GV-20. As the rope is connected to GV-20, shoulder and scapula, then pull the rope up gently. Then, lower your upper body that's now suspended by the rope from heaven on to your lower body, which is forming a triangle with your Tan Den and UNA s.

Feeling that shoulder and scapula were full of bright white clouds, move down lightly on to the Hara (First: upper Tan Den, area of the Kidney/12th floating ribs then lower Tan Den).

- H) *At this point, this posture should feel quite natural and comfortable to you.
*Check to confirm if you are relaxed. Relax your face. Your eyebrows should be relaxed and loose, and the outer corners of your eyes should be slightly pointing downward, and the corners of your mouth curled a little upward with **I-Ne** (sounds **I**-dimension; **ne** as in "easy", the mouth remain closed they are made by almost biting the teeth very lightly without grind one's teeth). Smile as if you are Buddha. The shape of your lips is such that if you exaggerate it more, you'll almost start drooling.
- I) *Let's try and practice sitting, standing, and walking with this posture.

Make a circle with yours arms as if you're holding a big balloon.

*As the result of practice, when you feel confident with this posture, then proceed to the next step, which incorporates the needling into the posture described above. Make a circle (Pentagon) with both arms in front of your body. Then, put your fingers of both hands close together. Do you feel the Ki going in and out through your fingers? If your fingers are not emitting the Ki yet, loosen your shoulders, elbows, and wrists. Make your whole body more soft and relaxed, and then try to run some energy through your fingers. You must have surely felt Ki by this time. If you haven't. Then close your eyes and check every part of your body from the beginning, and most importantly, get rid of all unnecessary strains in your body. Being too relaxed and too loose is not good either. Just try to exist in a pure sense. As you are able to confirm this state of natural existence, you bring your Ki--consciousness-- to the tips of your fingers.

The next step is breathing technique.

The correct physical stance is something that can be improved for a short period of time, but one would return to one's bad habitual posture quite easily. This is because there is nothing that sustains the good posture from within. Once you notice in the collapse of your posture, your mind can send out an

instruction to correct your posture again to your body, but if your posture is not sustained and held by the correct breathing from within, your effort to hold good posture is only temporarily successful.

The correct posture is meant to be maintained naturally through deep breathing. Being natural is the best, or put in a different way, you can't practice deep breathing without a natural frame of mind. If you are irritated your breathing becomes shorter than normal, fear would make your inhalation stronger, or if you are nervous and tense, your breathing is being stopped and withheld within your chest, and so on--these are a few examples of the mind/breathing interaction. First, you need to realize the nature of the relationship between the mind and the breathing, and correct your mind, or if you notice the unnatural or undesirable frame of mind within you, by breathing in the manner that is the opposite state of mind, try to control your emotions and desires. Of course it is easier said than done. If you overanalyze the relation between the breathing and the mind, before you are able to control it, you might get suffocated. To prevent that, the easiest way to control your emotion through breathing is if you realize that you are being emotional, first of all start breathings slowly and deeply with nothing else in mind. Compared to just waiting for your mind to calm down without doing anything, with this method, your mind will be regulated and regain calmness much faster, along with a good posture.

In my clinic, usually I am not much concerned about the breathing, but concentrate more on the state of the consciousness as I am with my patients. However, I practice the following method of building a good *HARA* (abdomen) regularly every day.

First, inhale deeply through my nose as I inflate my lower abdomen. As I finish inhaling, inject the breath with an imaginary pump into the Tan Den. It spread in every direction to the front, back, and sides as if I were pumping air into a soccer ball situated in the area around CV-4. As I feel that I have pumped enough air into the Tan Den, hold it there for a long time as you can with relaxed body and Buddha smile. Then, after a while, exhale slowly through my mouth. While I am exhaling, if I am aware that I have some *Jaki* (evil Ki) in my mind, put them together and exhale them strongly with my breath on intentionally.

As a result of your everyday training, if you reach the point in which you feel the existence of lower center of gravity (Ki) without conscious effort to breathe, as the Center of Ki goes further down to your feet, you are physically and mentally balanced and more stable. You also will have a reinforced motivation in life. In addition, if the Center of Ki goes down from your feet to the Center of the Earth, then into the infinite space, you are physically and mentally fulfilled and totally self-confident. Physically, you feel transparent so that you do not have to pay attention to your body.

At the point of the Center of the Universe, you are full of energy, make not only yourself but also others around you happy. You feel united with wholeness (Something Great/*Kami*) and you can show your best performance in fields like an expert oriental medical physician.

At this time, you will begin using a needle,

You will start needling from the posture I finished describing above. Hold the needle at the tip of the round ring you have formed with your arms, and bring down the needle naturally and softly to the acupuncture point of the patient as if you are lending your whole arms gently to the patient. Please experiment with this technique and fine-tune it in your own way.