Acupuncture must be performed under the careful supervision of an experienced practitioner as it requires the insertion of needles at different pressure points in the body, thus manipulating the points to promote the human body's natural ability to heal itself. Acupressure, on the other hand, can easily be learnt from training and then applied by following a handbook. Anyone can perform acupressure on themselves by applying pressure on the specified spot with your fingers.

How Does Acupressure Work?

Every human being comes with an in-built flow of bio-electricity that acts as our vital force from the time of our birth till the moment we die. Bio-electricity runs from our fingers through the rest of the body until it reaches our feet. Meridian lines or the channels through which bio-electricity flows often get blocked when we fall ill or are afflicted with diseases. The natural healing process of acupressure helps in releasing the blocked energy, thus relieving us of the pain and discomfort we've been suffering.

Using the power of the hand, acupressure can help relieve people from stress-related ailments, as it releases tension by increasing circulation thereby leading to a healthier mind and body.

Acupressure can also be used to diagnose your ailments. When you start acupressure, you apply pressure to various points on your hands and feet. Each point can be directly linked to an organ of the body. When you find some points to be very painful, you can understand that the organs that the points correspond to are in trouble.

"The pain will start to lessen very quickly if these points are pressed daily," says acupressurist Sagar Sagir. "This means that the organs or glands that they correspond to have started the healing process. When we press these points, toxins are being released from these organs or nerves and ridding our body of its various ailments, says Sagir. A change in food consumption and lifestyle is a necessity if one wants to feel completely healthy. Sagir emphasises on eating early and in a slow manner, chewing the food well before swallowing. He recommends on eating in a calm frame of mind with a positive focus on the food.

You should begin your day by drinking 2 glasses of warm water every morning, says Sagir. He also recommends eating half a raw tomato before eating breakfast and having a piece of raw papaya after breakfast. Sagir says that a glass of green juice with liquidised, strained leafy green vegetables, tomatoes and carrots along with a teaspoon of honey would be ideal for the health. If you want to stay healthy, you should have dinner before 8 pm. Before sleeping, you should have warm water, fruit juice and tomato. Acupressure should be applied after you have the warm water in the morning, around 30 minutes after you have had lunch and just before you go to sleep, suggest Sagir.

"Habits around food consumption are the main cause of sickness. Negative thoughts are another cause as they lead to a toxic mind and body. Finally, complete dependence on medication is also quite dangerous," says Sagir.

Instead of depending on others to offer us relief through acupressure, we should take the initiative to learn this method and practice it on ourselves, says Sagir. Anyone practicing acupressure on themselves will be able to identify 90 to 100 percent of the trigger or pressure points and concentrate on them. If a close relative practices acupressure on someone, 70 to 90 percent of the pressure points will be identified and pressed upon. However, if one depends on a a "professional" to administer acupressure, they will mostly be able to apply pressure only on around 40 to 70 percent of the trigger points.

Many youngsters have taken acupressure to be an easy source of earning quick money, says Sagir sadly. Even though acupressure has no side effects, many of these unskilled therapists have exerted pressure on the wrong points of the body, thus leading to discomfort in the patient's body.

"Many of my own students have only undertaken a preliminary course on the treatment before claiming to be "professional therapists." I would advise everyone interested in acupressure to take a compulsory training on the treatment. In this way, they will at least be able to ascertain whether the professional is applying pressure on the right points or not," says Sagir.

Sagir terms acupressure as the gift of nature, stating that the treatment was devised by sages who wanted to perfect their health and create a connection with a more divine power. Acupressure, thus, is a holistic treatment, resulting in physical, mental and spiritual cure.

Acupressure will only work when complete meditative concentration is applied on the treatment, says Sagir.

"When applying acupressure, one should be aware of the pain so that we can start to feel the curative process at work on a daily basis. We can try and maintain this awareness so that the whole process becomes a meditation of the body, mind and spirit."

Sagir has authored 'Bangladesh-e Acuupressure-er Poth Porikroma' and a self treatment manual called 'Shochikitsha Proyogbidhi', which detail how acupressure can be practiced by oneself. They are both available at Acupressure Service Centre at Electric Plaza, Tropicana Tower in Purana Paltan.