

the practice
M E L I N D A W E B B

**ACUPRESSURE
POINTS FOR
EASING LABOUR &
BIRTH**

PROMOTING A NATURAL
LABOUR AND PARTNER
INVOLVEMENT



ACUPRESSURE POINTS

FOR EASING LABOUR & BIRTH



Acupressure evolves from Traditional Chinese Medicine - a therapy used for thousands of years. Our bodies have channels or meridians where energy, known as Qi, flows. Each channel or meridian has specific points that signal or target areas causing a reaction.

Acupressure is a fantastic tool that supports women in labour to lessen the harsh intensity of a contraction and often allowing for an easier birth. The four points included are most popular due to their effectiveness and ease of use.

For the birth partner knowing exactly what to do and when to do it during labour can be daunting. The information in this booklet arms them with tools to be effectively involved and 'hands-on' in the labour. Using these points may also help to avoid a medical intervention.

There are hundreds of acupressure points, however, the points described have been chosen from a combination of what mothers, birth partners, therapists and midwives have told us they have used.

This, along with my knowledge as an acupuncturist and doula - present at other women's births, has inspired me to document them here. You can use these points from week 38 to help the body relax into labour.

Combining acupressure with breathing allows for the mind-body to relax.

These points can be used at various times during labour.

Firm pressure should be applied, but the sensation should not be sharp.

They should feel comfortable. Pressure can be applied every few hours to encourage labour, for 3-5 minutes.

Learn and practice these four points with your birthing partner and a powerful birth support tool will be literally in your hands.

NO-NO'S TO READ BEFORE YOU START

Acupressure is forbidden during the first three months of pregnancy; these points are to be used solely from week 38. Great caution must be taken, pressure should not be applied on open wounds or areas of inflammation.

Some acupressure points have a number of different functions and each person can experience a different sensation when pressure is applied, however, in general, it has the same therapeutic effect.

THING'S TO KEEP IN MIND

Direct firm pressure should be applied to both sides of the body. Points should not be uncomfortable, the pressure felt should allow the mother to feel a sensation, or it can be more noticeable when the pressure is discontinued.

Pre-labour points can be stimulated from 38 weeks of pregnancy. When in labour use the points as

often as you want. Measurements for locating the points are always done using the equivalent of the mother's finger and thumb lengths.

WHY USE ACUPRESSURE FOR BIRTH

- Improves comfort levels
- A great coping mechanism for labour
- Gets contractions going and keeps them flowing
- Allows for partner input
- Helps with relaxation
- Easily located and simple to learn when to use

THE FOUR MAIN ACUPRESSURE POINTS

1. The Sacral points –

Use to reduce the intensity of the contraction.

2. The Shoulder points –

Use to promote labour, for relief of intensity, and to encourage descent of the baby.

3. The Shin point –

Use to promote labour, to strengthen contractions and to encourage the release of the placenta.

4. The Thumb point –

Use to promote labour and to strengthen contractions.



USE TO REDUCE THE INTENSITY OF
THE CONTRACTION

THE SACRAL POINTS

LOWERBACK



T H E

SACRAL POINTS

WHAT IT PROVIDES

- Gets contractions going
- Allows labour to progress
- Good for a poor dilating cervix
- Great for relieving the intensity of contractions

HOW TO LOCATE

- Place index finger at the top of the bottom line, measure up to the second knuckle for the Sacral point, and then it is 1 thumb knuckle width in distance out. You will feel a dip in the sacral foramen

WHEN & HOW TO USE

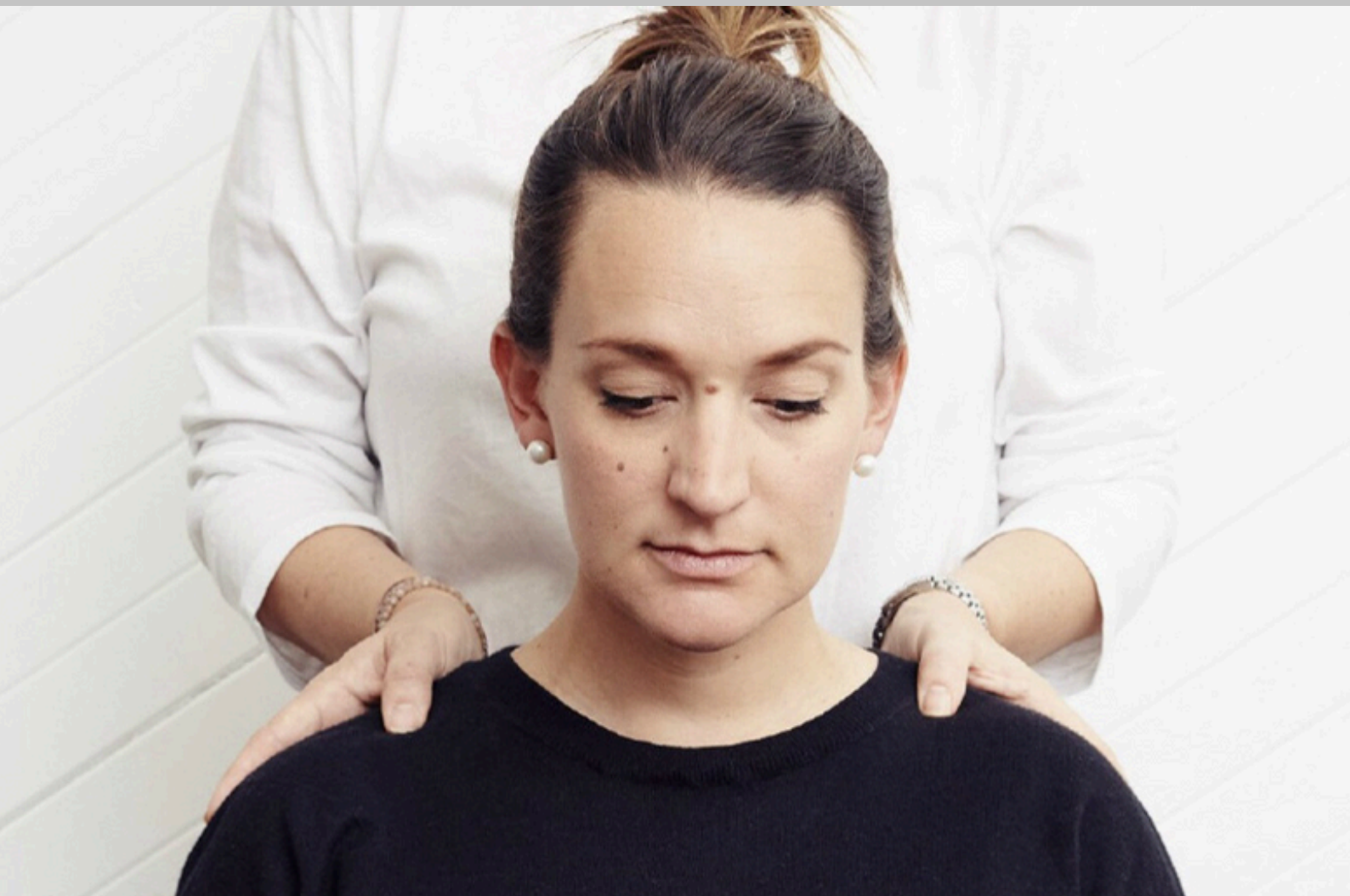
- Great for the beginning of a contraction and can be used in the 1st & 2nd stage labour.
- Use when mum is leaning over on bed, ball, or bath.



2

USE TO PROMOTE LABOUR, FOR RELIEF
OF INTENSITY, AND TO ENCOURAGE
DESCENT OF THE BABY

THE SHOULDER POINTS



T H E

SHOULDER POINTS

WHAT IT PROVIDES

- Allows for baby to descend and drop into the pelvis
- Best if baby not engaged
- Aids both 1st & 2nd Stage labour
- Allows milk flow for breastfeeding

HOW TO LOCATE

- Find the centre of the backbone at base of the neck (C7), and then locate the tip of shoulder bone (acromion), locate $\frac{1}{2}$ way point at the crest of the trapezius muscle, there is a dip where your finger can fall into.

WHEN & HOW TO USE

- Use at the beginning of a contraction or apply more force as contraction continues
- Apply firm pressure, pushing down
- Best done with knuckles, thumbs can be used, but may get sore after some time
- Elbows can be used also





USE TO PROMOTE LABOUR, TO STRENGTHEN
CONTRACTIONS AND TO ENCOURAGE THE
RELEASE OF THE PLACENTA

THE SHIN POINT



THE SHIN POINT

WHAT IT PROVIDES

- Promotes labour with aiding cervix to dilate
- Strengthens contractions and lengthens in early labour
- Gets labour moving if slowed
- Reliefs the intensity felt with contractions
- Encourages release of the placenta in the 3rd stage

HOW TO LOCATE

- Found directly above the ankle bone (medial malleolus) on the inside of the leg, roll your finger over the edge of the tibia bone
- 4 horizontal finger lengths (mother's finger size)
- Slide finger up from the edge of tibia bone into the dip, maybe tender with pressure

WHEN & HOW TO USE

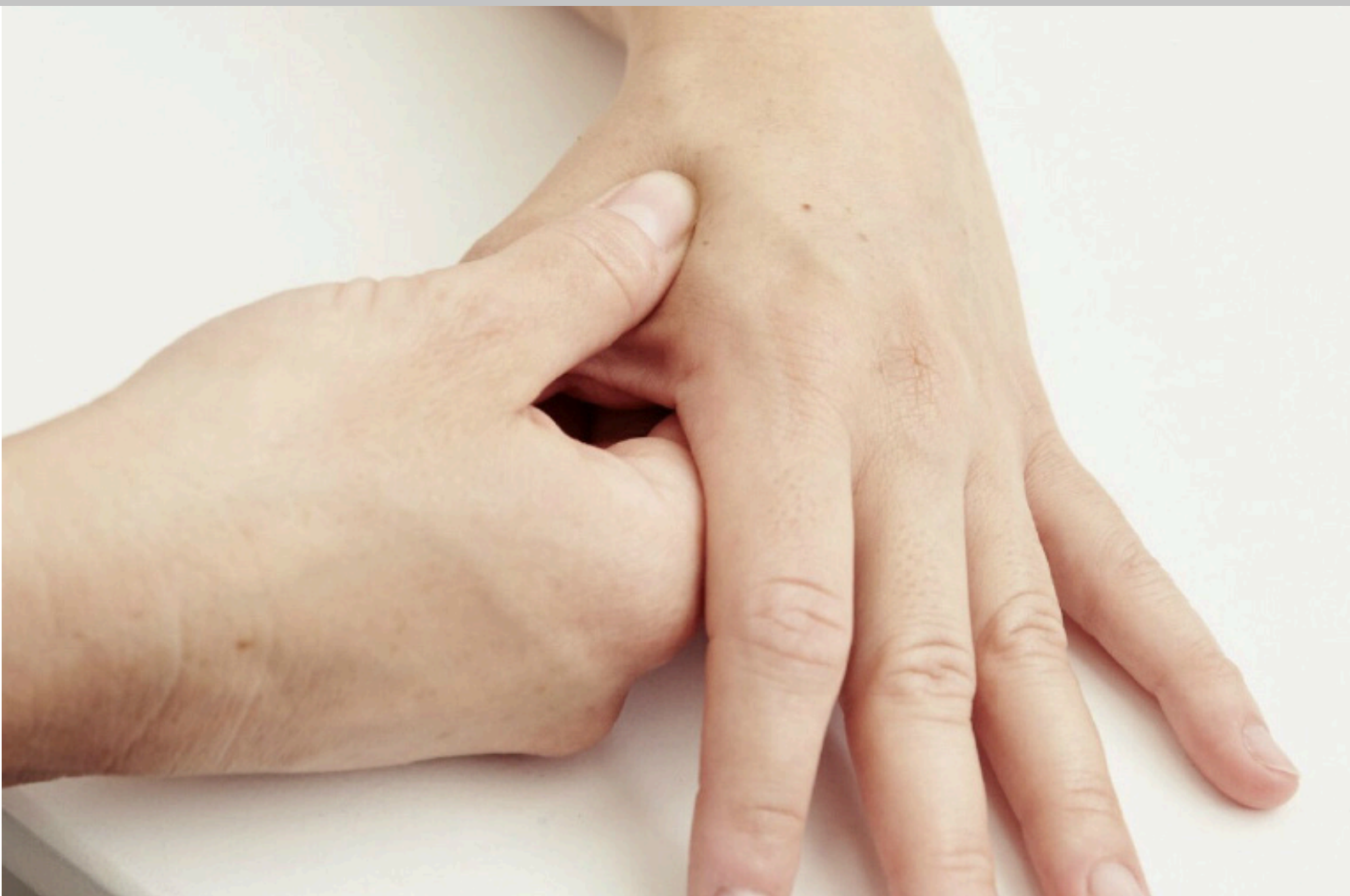
- To establish labour apply pressure every few hours for 5 minutes
- For early labour apply pressure to one leg at a time for 1 minute, swap to the other leg 20 minutes later
- Great for use between surges when they are established
- Firm pressure with index finger/thumb or knuckle
- Can be used with thumb point, using alternate sides of the body





USE TO PROMOTE LABOUR AND TO
STRENGTHEN CONTRACTIONS

THE THUMB POINT



THE THUMB POINT

WHAT IT PROVIDES

- Induces labour
- Strengthens contractions
- Increases contractions
- Moves baby down
- General pain relief

HOW TO LOCATE

- Place the thumb and index finger together. The point is then found in a mound between the two fingers
- You may feel a mild achy sensation when stimulated

WHEN & HOW TO USE

- To start labour
- Helps establish a rhythm
- Use in established 1st Stage of labour
- During Transition, to decrease the intensity felt during the contraction
- In 2nd Stage it aids with moving baby down through the birth canal



T H E

SHIN & THUMB POINT

WHY & HOW TO USE

- These are a good combination to continue contractions when labour has stalled
- Do every half hour for 5 minutes
- Alternating sides of the body (5 minutes each side)



A B O U T

MELINDA WEBB

Since becoming a mother in the late '90s Melinda Webb gained a strong interest in pregnancy.

Studying to become a Doula at the Australian Doula College following with Childbirth Education, Melinda then went on to obtain a Bachelor of Science in Traditional Chinese Medicine from the University of Technology in Sydney.

Melinda is also trains with Dr Joe Dispenza, joining his Inner health Coalition in 2024.

Melinda uses these combined skills as a pregnancy and birth mentor, she practices acupuncture from her own women's health clinic Beattie Street Health Studio in Balmain.

She is now teaching acupressure to Doulas and Midwives and regularly conducts workshops on acupressure and other women's health-related topics.

She attends births as a Doula, using both acupressure and acupuncture,



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