A basic knowledge of Dim Mak pressure points also known as acupuncture points (acu-points) is an invaluable tool for any serious martial artist. If you are interested in learning about acupuncture points, or you are currently practicing Qi Gong, Nei Gong, or internal martial arts, then learning these points should be an essential part of your training.

Most serious martial arts practitioners have heard about the famous "Dim Mak death touch" but have no idea of how to learn it, as there is very limited access to the information. Knowledge of these points can enormously benefit any martial artist, not only because they can be used to inflict pain and discomfort, but also they can be used to promote health and prevent injury. Furthermore, knowledge of acupuncture points deepens one’s understanding of the body’s internal energetic processes. This knowledge is extremely helpful if you practice Qi Gong or Nei Gong exercises from the internal martial arts. Lastly, striking vital points is a part of every martial art, and a basic knowledge of vital points can be a useful self-defense tool.

This is why we have put together "The essential guide to Dim Mak pressure points" PDF to give an internal martial artist global insight into the energetic workings of the body during the practice of Nei Gong and internal forms. From this perspective, the only meridian pathways one needs to know are the circulation of the Du Mai and Ren Mai, which are two channels running on the centerline of the body, back and front, respectively. These points have many functions, so by learning them you are opening up a new world of possibilities from Nei Gong and self-defense to health and healing.

If possible, learn the point names in Chinese, but if not, at least learn what the Chinese name means. Often the name gives clues to function, interrelationships between points and/or location.
The 20 Acu-Points

1. REN 1 (Huiyin)  
2. REN 4 (Guanyuan)  
3. REN 6 (Qihai)  
4. REN 17 (Danzhong)  
5. DU 1 (Chengqi)  
6. DU 4 (Mingmen)  
7. DU 14 (Dazhui)  
8. DU 16 (Fengfu)  
9. DU 20 (Baihui)  
10. DU 26 (Shuigou)  
11. KID 1 (Yongquan)  
12. P 8 (Laogong)  
13. LI 4 (He Gu)  
14. SJ 5 (Waiguan)  
15. P 6 (Neiguan)  
16. GB 21 (Jianjing)  
17. LV 13 (Zhangmen)  
18. ST 36 (Zusanli)  
19. LI 10 (Shousanli)  
20. SP 6 (Sanyinjiaio)
1 會陰 REN 1 (Huiyin) “Yin Meeting”

Huiyin, on the Ren (Conception) Vessel, is the meeting point of Du Mai, Ren Mai and Chong Mai, and is the gathering point of yin Qi in the body. Huiyin lies anatomically opposite Baihui DU 20, on the Du (Governing) Vessel. Baihui is the gathering point for the yang qi of the body. Huiyin is in the centre of the perineum, while Baihui is on the top of the head.

2 關元 REN 4 (Guanyuan) “Pass of the Origin”

Guanyuan, the “Pass of the Origin” is also called Dantian (“Cinnabar Field”). This is the point on the front of the body that corresponds to Mingmen, the life gate, where the original yang has its root. This area is connected internally with Qihai (REN 6) and both are often referred to as the Dantian, either singly or collectively. Breath and Qi gather and are stored in Guanyuan and Qihai during the practice of “Kidney Breathing.” This acu-point promotes health and strengthens the kidneys particularly when moxibustion is employed.

3 氣海 REN 6 (Qihai) “Sea of Qi”

Qihai, a point on the Ren (Conception) Channel, is also known as 下氣海 Xia Qihai (“Lower Sea of Qi”). Breath and Qi gather and are stored here during the practice of Kidney Breathing. Qihai is sometimes referred to as the Dantian. This acu-point promotes health and can strengthen the kidneys particularly when moxibustion is employed.
4 膈中 REN 17 (Danzhong) “Chest Center”

Danzhong is also known as *Shang Qihai* (“Upper Sea of Qi). The first character (*Dan*) is also sometimes Romanized as *Shan*. Qi and Breath gather here because it is a meeting point of Qi and of several meridians: the Spleen (foot *Taiyin*) channel, Kidney (foot *Shaoyin*) channel, Sanjiao (hand *Shaoyang*) channel and Ren Mai. The pericardium, the sac that wraps the heart, lies right behind this point. It is an attack point that can damage the heart if hit with sufficient force, and fractures to the sternum in this area are dangerous. Many of the movements in internal martial arts are done in such a way that this point is protected.
5 長強 DU 1 (Changqiang) “Long Strong”

Changqiang, a point underneath the tip of the coccyx, has many names. Common names for Changqiang in Daoist texts are Guiwei (Tortoise Tail) or Weilu (Tail Gate). DU 1 is the starting point of the Du (Governing) Channel, where the kidney yang energy emanates outward, extending itself along the Du Channel. Since the Governing Vessel controls the yang of the body, this point effects the body’s strength and vigor. Some sources say that needling this point will make the penis “long and strong.”[1] In martial arts, this acu-point is a vital point that must be protected. A hard kick to this point can do great damage to the body.

6 命門 Du 4 (Mingmen)

“Life Gate”

Mingmen, The Gate of Life, is located between the kidneys and is sometimes called “the moving Qi Between the Kidneys.” Yang energy connects and gathers here. Although the “Life Gate” (Mingmen) is actually inside the body, the Mingmen acu-point is a major acu-point for directly accessing the Life Gate. Often Moxibustion is applied to this point to activate and strengthen the Mingmen. Mingmen has a direct connection with Dantian. They are essentially one entity with two expressions. The Mingmen is said to “dominate all twelve channels.” In Kidney Breathing, one is breathing directly into Mingmen. In the neijia, internal movement emanates from Mingmen and its connection with the yongquan points on the bottoms of the feet.
7 大椎DU 14 (Dazhui) “Big Hammer”

*Dazhui* can also mean “Big Vertebrae.” It is located below the most prominent of the Cervical vertebra. *Dazhui* is a meeting point for all of the six yang meridians and Du Mai. It acts a hub for Qi and Breath entering or leaving the head and neck, and also for the movement of Qi and Breath into the arms. It is a place where Qi can block in Microcosmic Orbit Circulation.
8 風府DU 16 (Fengfu) “Wind Mansion”

Fengfu is a point where wind can enter the body, leading to colds, stiff neck and even numbness of the head and face. In acupuncture, DU 16 is also used to treat wind disorders. DU 16 is just below DU 17 Nao Hu (“Brain Door”), also called Yu Zhen (“Jade Pillow”). Yang Qi rising along Du Mai enters the brain through this point. In Daoist meditation and Micro-cosmic Orbit Circulation, the area between DU 16 and DU 17 is one of the places where Qi easily blocks. In the internal arts and in Qi Gong and Nei Gong exercises, one of the functions of the fundamental postural alignments is to keep this point open so that Qi and Breath can enter the brain unobstructed. DU 16, and the area at the base of the skull in general, are susceptible to vital point strikes that shock the brain. Fengfu is particularly susceptible to chopping and shearing strikes.
9 百會DU 20 (Baihui) “Hundred Meeting”
Baihui is anatomically opposite REN 1 (Huiyin) in the perineum. Baihui is a place where yang converges and gathers, while Huiyin is a gathering or collecting point for the yin. The yang vessels and Du Mai all meet at Baihui. Other meridians like the Liver Meridian of Foot Jueyin also have internal pathways that connect to Baihui. As the highest point on the body, Baihui has a direct connection with the energy of Heaven (yang). In this sense, Baihui is in energetic opposition to KID 1 (Yongquan), which is on the bottom of the foot and connects directly with Earth (yin). When practicing Nei Gong or Zhan Zhuang exercises, one of the basic goals is to foster the rising of the “clear yang,” which leads to a sensation of Qi and Breath gathering at Baihui. It is a point where the “hundred spirits are also said to converge. [2]
10. 水溝DU 26 (Shuigou) “Water Ditch”

Shuigou is also known as 人中 Renzhong (“Human Center”). The name of the point describes the location and appearance of the point in the philtrum, the ditch or trough below the nose. This point is where Qi and Breath, moving through Du Mai, enter the mouth to connect with Ren Mai. DU 26 is a very strong point, famous for its ability to revive someone even if they appear to be dead. It is used as revival point in cases of shock, fainting and heart attack. Like many revival points, it can also be used to knock someone out. A hard strike to DU 26 with one knuckle or a chop can cause unconsciousness.
11. 涌泉KID 1 (Yongquan) “Bubbling Well”
The name of this point, yongquan, conjures up the image of a spring where water is gushing out of the earth. Qi gushes forth from this spot to move upward through the body. In the internal arts, Qi and Breath emanating from the Earth come through this point and move up to connect with the kidneys and Mingmen. This is the water of the Earth connecting to Mingmen fire. Their combination creates balance and strength. Proper posture and alignment enhance this connection. Awareness of Yongquan is critical to remaining stable and rooted and to generating power that comes from the ground up. In Zhan Zhuang, San Ti Shi, Qi Gong exercises and Circle Walking Nei Gong, practitioners sense the connection between Yongquan, Mingmen and Baihui.
12. 勞宮 P 8 (Laogong) “Palace of Labor”

Laogong, in the center of the palm, must be open and hollow for Qi to spread into the hand and fingers. This point also has a direct connection with Yongquan. In Nei Gong, any change at Yongquan – for example from a weight shift – has an immediate and direct reflection at Laogong. These four points on the hands and feet (Laogong and Yongquan) must connect to Dantian for the body and the Qi to be integrated. This is called “Combining the Three Hearts.”
13. 合谷 LI 4 (Hegu) “Valley Junction”
In the internal arts, Hegu is commonly called Hukou (“Tiger’s Mouth”). This is because when the fingers are spread, the space between thumb and forefinger resembles the mouth of a tiger. In internal arts and Nei Gong, this area must be open and round for Qi and Breath to fill the hands. The “Tiger’s Mouth” can also seize and attack. LI 4 is a famous point for headaches and in fact can be used for many problems of the head and face. It is effective with both acupuncture and acupressure. In Qinna techniques, one sometimes seizes this point to weaken the opponent’s hand. This point should not be needled or pressed hard during pregnancy, because it moves Qi very strongly in the whole body.
14. 外關 SJ 5 (Waiguan) “Outer Pass”
Located in the forearm above the wrist crease, Waiguan is where the San Jiao (Triple Burner) Channel connects to the Pericardium Channel through Neiguan (P 6). Waiguan lies directly opposite Neiguan. Waiguan is a “gate point” which, when open, allows Qi to flow smoothly into the hand and fingers. In the internal martial arts and Nei Gong exercises, SJ 5 is kept open during the postures and movements. Waiguan is also a confluent, opening point for the Yang Linking Vessel (Yang Wei Mai), an Extraordinary meridian that links the yang Channels of the body, hence it is an important point in Macro-Cosmic Orbit Circulation. Lastly, SJ 5 is a point that is often attacked in Qinna techniques, like Golden Thread Wraps the Wrist.
15. **内關 P 6 (Nei Guan) “Inner Pass”**

*Nei Guan* is a corollary to the SJ 5 point, in that it connects the Pericardium channel with the San Jiao Channel via SJ 5. *Neiguan* lies directly opposite SJ 5 and like SJ 5 is a gate point for Qi to flow smoothly into the hand and fingers. In the internal arts and Nei Gong exercises, P 6 is kept open during the postures and movements. *Neiguan* is also a confluent, opening point for the Yin Linking Vessel (Yin Wei Mai), an Extraordinary meridian that links the yin Channels of the body, hence it is an important point in Macro-Cosmic Orbit Circulation. P 6 is a vital point that can be struck to weaken the arm and the pericardium channel. It can be struck by blocking, hit by direct strikes or seized in *Qin Na* techniques. *Neiguan* is also an important acupuncture point for relieving nausea and motion sickness. It can be needled or pressed for this purpose.

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**Figure 1**

**Figure 2**
16. 肩井 GB 21 (Jianjing) “Shoulder Well”
Jianjing is an important point that regulates the flow of Qi downward, both into the torso and into the shoulder and arm. The San Jiao, Stomach, Gallbladder and Yang Linking Vessel all meet at Jianjing. The Neigong Classic states that in order to refine the steps, “one must gather Jin, from GB 21 and make it sink down to Kid 1 (Yongquan).” [3] Sinking GB 21 to Kid 1 stabilizes the body and allows the shoulders to naturally relax, so that power can be transmitted out of the arm, while simultaneously connecting that power to the legs. GB 21 and LI 11 and LI 10 are acu-points that must be open and relaxed in order for whole body power to be transmitted to the hands. Sinking GB 21 to Kid 1 also lowers the blood pressure and makes Qi descend. For this reason, it is contraindicated to needle or press the point with force during pregnancy. Disrupting Jianjing can break the opponents balance. Jianjing can also be struck in order to weaken and damage the arm and neck. When struck downward it weakens the legs.
17. 章門LV 13 (Zhangmen) “Section Gate” “Screen Gate”

Zhangmen is an important point on the Belt Channel (Dai Mai). It is also a meeting point for the Zang Organs: Kidneys, Liver, Spleen, Lungs and Heart. This point is located at the tip of the 11th rib. One means of locating it is to bend your arm at the elbow. The tip of the elbow is generally on the point. This point acts as a “screen” that protects the internal organs. Attacks that penetrate into this point can cause internal organ damage. Therefore, Zhangmen is a vital point that many techniques in the internal forms are targeting. The elbows must sink and wrap inward in the internal arts, because it is crucial that this area be protected. Anatomically, the Liver and Gallbladder are behind the right Zhangmen, and the Spleen lies underneath the left Zhangmen. It is particularly dangerous to be hit in the Spleen, as it is a soft organ filled with blood that can easily rupture. Qi gong exercises that benefit the Liver often have movements in which the elbows brush LV 13 as the arms move forward and back. This stimulates the LV 13 acu-point and benefits the Liver and Spleen Qi.
18. ST 36 (Zusanli) “Leg Three Li”
One of the most well known and most commonly used acupuncture points, Zusanli, ST 36, energizes the leg. It is called “Leg Three Li” (a Li is a measure of distance equaling about a third of a mile), because stimulation of the point, particularly with moxibustion, allows a fatigued person to go another three Li. Zusanli is also sometimes called 下氣海 Xiaqihai (“Lower Sea of Qi”) It implies that this point may have an effect comparable to Qihai (REN 6). [4] Zusanli is also a vital point that is kicked in order to weaken the leg.
19. LI 10 (*Shousanli*) “Arm Three Li”

*Shousanli*, or Arm Three Li is comparable to ST 36. It is an energizer point for the arm. Pressure on this point can relieve pain in the shoulder and arm, and give the arm more energy to keep going. *Shousanli* is also a vital point that is commonly attacked in martial arts. Striking this point can cause temporary paralysis of the arm, because it is a point where the radial nerve can be accessed.
0. SP6 (Sanyinjiao) “Three Yin Intersection”
Sanyinjiao, on the inside of the lower leg, is a point where the three leg yin meridians (Spleen, Liver and Kidney) intersect. Because this point promotes the functioning of the three yin leg channels, all of which meet in the abdomen, it is an important point for abdominal pain, and digestive issues, as well as and gynecological problems, such as Dysmenorrhea. In the martial arts, this point is a target for low kicks, as a blow here weakens the leg.