



LEAH OLSON, L Ac

ACUPUNCTURE
HERBAL MEDICINE

920 574 0447

leah@wholefamilyacupuncture.com

wholefamilyacupuncture.com

612 E LONGVIEW DR, STE B APPLETON, WI 54911

Understanding and Managing Foot Pain: A Self-Care Guide

Most people don't realize that the eleven muscles of the lower leg are actually foot muscles. Foot rubs can feel good, but the origin of the problem might lie higher up the leg.

The Connection Between Trigger Points and Acupuncture

Trigger points are small, sensitive areas in your muscles that can cause pain both at the point itself and in other areas of your body (referred pain). These points often correspond with traditional acupuncture points, which isn't surprising given our growing understanding of how the body's myofascial (muscle and connective tissue) system overlaps with traditional acupuncture meridians. When you apply pressure to these points, you stimulate the same nerve fibers that respond to acupuncture needles, making self-massage a powerful tool for home care.

Getting Started with Self-Massage

The key to effective self-massage is gentle, sustained pressure rather than aggressive rubbing. You'll need a massage ball - while a tennis ball works to start, I recommend the Yoga Tune Up therapy balls for their durability and perfect density. When working on a point:

- Start with light pressure and gradually increase as the tissue releases
- If you find yourself holding your breath, that's a sign you're using too much pressure
- Spend no more than a couple of minutes on each area.
- Repeat every 2-3 days
- If you experience any nerve sensations (tingling, numbness, or sharp pain), adjust the position of the ball

Pain and Numbness on the Top of the Foot

Check for tenderness at the trigger points on the front of the leg. I like to massage these points by sitting on a chair and using the heel of my opposite foot to scrub down these points. Closer to the ankle I prefer to use a tool called a "Knobble" to massage these points. It's more comfortable to use a Knobble over clothing rather than on bare skin.

Once you've addressed any tender points on the shin, check the trigger points on the top of the foot. I like to use the Knobble for this work.

Pain and Numbness on the Bottom of the Foot

Check for tender spots on the back of the leg. I massage these points by sitting on a chair or bed and crossing my leg over my knee, then using my knee to scrub down the back of the calf on the opposite leg. A "Knobble" tool also works well higher up on the calf muscles.

After looking for tender spots on the calf, look for tender spots on the bottom of the foot. I prefer to use a hard rubber bouncy ball.

See the illustration below for help locating the common trigger points in this muscle. If you're currently working with me for acupuncture, I'll go over this at your next appointment.

