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Laurie O'Flynn gives a DIY diagnostic and pain relief machine the thumbs up

TRADITIONAL Chinese medicine (TCM) has gone techno.

A hand-held machine has been invented based on the principles of acupuncture. Simple to use, it can diagnose health problems, and also to help relieve up to 27 conditions. These include blood pressure problems, insomnia, sinusitis, arthritis, lower back pain, headache, impotence and bronchitis/asthma.

The Aculife machine has taken 16 years to develop and uses an electromagnetic pulse emitted from a small wand which takes the place of needles in acupuncture.

HOW IT WORKS: The wand is run over the hand in detect mode, and any painful acupoints mark where chi is blocked.

Each point corresponds to an organ of the body (see above map) and in the event that all of the points representing a particular organ are affected, then there is a problem with that organ.

The machine can then be put into relieve mode to help stimulate the body to relieve the problem, but a visit to a doctor should also be arranged.

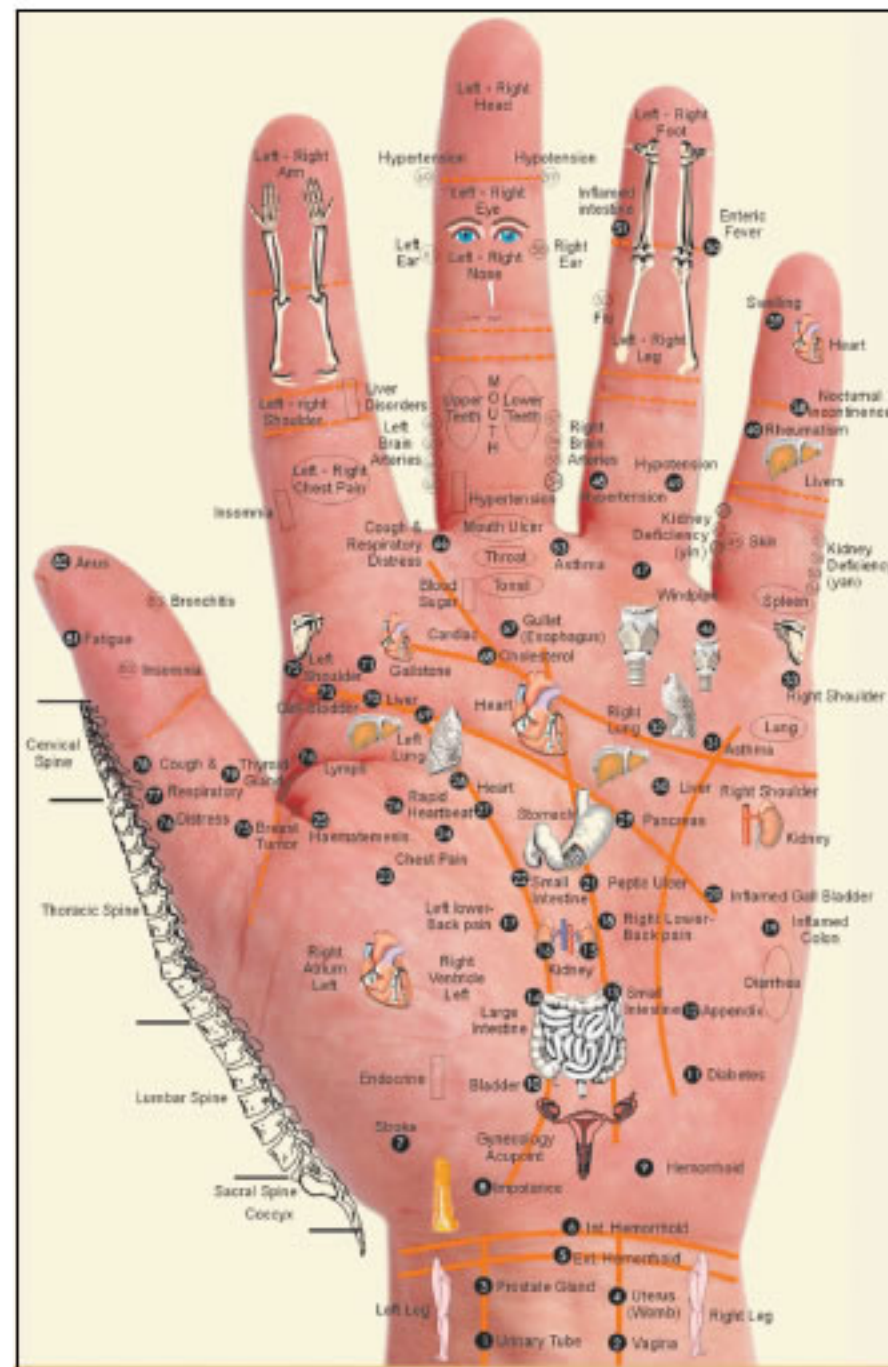
In relieve mode, the Aculife machine stimulates the body to release endorphins to relieve pain, and also to produce red and white blood cells to boost the immune system.

DOES IT WORK? I have been playing with the machine for three weeks, and compared its findings with those of Cork-based reflexologist, Mary O'Dowd.

The results were surprisingly accurate.

The Aculife has been telling me for weeks that I have a bad back, particularly in the sacral area, a bad neck, the right side most affected, a dodgy intestine and something amiss in the left lung, which I strongly questioned.

In the reflexology treatment, Mary O'Dowd found the back



Finger on the pulse: The Aculife wand is run over your hand in detect mode, and any painful acupoints mark where chi, or energy, is blocked. Each point corresponds to an organ of the body.

HANDS UP

if you can find your weak points

problem, the right side of the neck and the intestine, and gave me some useful advice on how to change my eating habits in order to help the problem.

She also found something wrong with the left lung and throat. I disputed this as, thankfully, I do not suffer from any lung related conditions. However, I discovered in our session that the problem may not be physical but emotional, and linked to panic attacks that I used to have 10 years ago — symptoms of which tend to return when I'm forced to speak in public.

For some people, during panic attacks they feel like they are having a heart attack. In my case I was unable to expel air from my lungs or speak.

I have also tried the Aculife on friends and family.

With one subject it found a known cholesterol problem and also highlighted and relieved sinus problems for one person. I also got relief from my aching back, but consistent use is needed for more lasting relief.

CHECK OUT: I cross checked accuracy of Aculife with other

healthcare professionals.

Chartered physiotherapist, Nevill Coen, who has worked in the private sector with various sports clubs such as Bray Wanderers and the Wicklow Senior Football team, used the device for three months in his physiotherapy and sport injury clinic.

Gadgets aren't unusual in the profession, but the results from this one surprised him.

"In one case I had a client suffering from whiplash who had come for a number of physio sessions and who was making slow progress. One day I used the Aculife on her and never saw her again. A number of months later I met her and she said that after that session the pain was gone and she didn't need to come back for more treatment."

"I have found the machine to be beneficial on both a diagnostic and a pain relieving level," he said.

Rosemarie Skinner, a reflexologist who uses magnet therapy, agrees that the machine is accurate and can relieve pain, but she also highlights the potential to save money.

"I think that it will catch on, particularly with therapists, but it will

be good for people who spend money on therapists anyway," she said.

EASTERN PROMISE: The machine was brought to Ireland by businessman, Niall Strickland, who discovered it at a trade show in Hong Kong.

"I was in Hong Kong on a business trip and I had a lot of pain in my back and shoulder. The people at this stand asked if I wanted them to take away my pain, and after 10 minutes in relieve mode, the pain was gone."

"I bought one and then friends and family asked for them, and it has gone from there," he says.

Mr Strickland has survived cancer on a number of occasions, and also has a worn disc in his lower back that causes severe sciatic pain which pain experts wanted to manage with strong pain killers.

"I attended the pain clinic in Tal-laght Hospital and they wanted to give me strong pain killers, but I can't work with half a brain. I also tried physio, rolling, chiropractic, and none of them worked. I use Aculife for 40 minutes a day for my

back pain, and that's how I can sleep at night," says the management consultant.

"This isn't a cure for a condition, but it stimulates the body to heal itself. It is very safe and has no side effects," he added.

"They are particularly good for men who won't go to a doctor. It's like a regular check-up without the hassle or the cost."

The Aculife isn't available in the shops, which keeps the cost down to €295 inclusive of delivery and after sales service.

"I sell it because I know that it works, and if people have any questions after they have bought it I am more than willing to help them because otherwise it will end up doing nothing in a cupboard somewhere. Also, if people aren't happy with it, they can send it back and recoup their money up to three weeks after purchase."

That sounds like a man who believes in his product.

■ For more information contact Niall Strickland on 01-6240841 or info@aculife-ireland.com or www.aculife-ireland.com