

ABDOMINAL SELF-MASSAGE

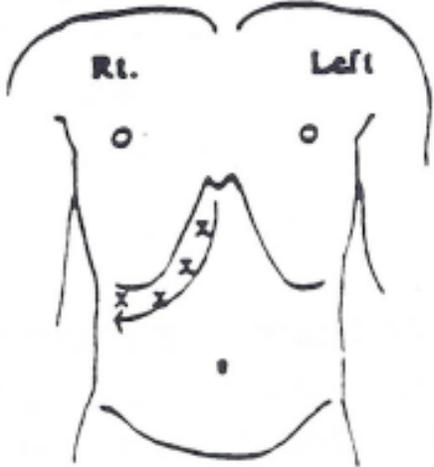
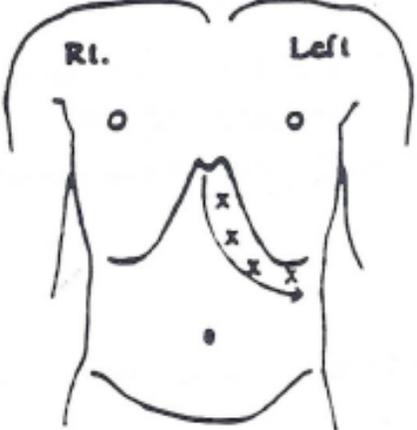
The *Hara*, as it is known in Japan, is the soft abdominal region stretching from below the ribs to the top of the pubic bone. It contains all of the major organs except the Heart and Lungs and is considered to be the center of vital energy. Pain, tension, lumps, misplaced pulsations or excessive softness in the Hara are indications of imbalance in the internal organs. These disappear from the Hara as imbalances are corrected.

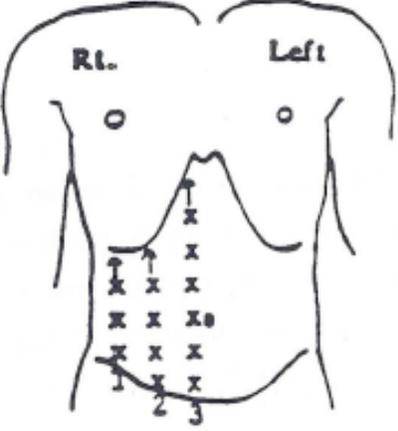
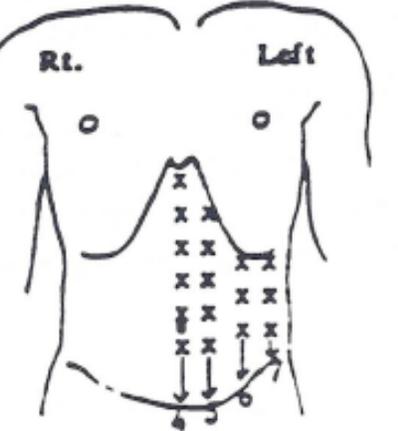
Massaging the abdomen yourself is an effective way to keep the energy in the internal organs flowing smoothly. When done on a daily basis it has long-term, cumulative results.

PROCEDURE: Takes about 20 minutes.

Lie on the back with knees bent. Spread feet apart slightly so the knees fall together in the center and can stay up without effort so you're not holding up your knees and your abdominal muscles can relax. Use relaxed and gentle abdominal breathing - not forced, but as deep as your ability to relax will allow. The *quality of the breath is very important*, allowing, rather than forcing the breath.

When first beginning to do abdominal self-massage, there may be pain, resistance or tension when pressing in under the ribs. This is common, and is a sign of congestion, mostly in the Liver and Gall Bladder. As you do this over a period of weeks, the pain and tension will disappear, and your fingers will sink deeper

 <p style="text-align: center;">Repeat 3x</p>	<p>STEP 1: Begin at the center and press under the right side of the rib cage with the fingers of both hands (using the flat ends of the fingers, not the tips).</p> <p>Apply this pressure as you exhale, continuing to press while exhaling to a count of 6. While inhaling, move the fingers to the side slightly, exhale and press again. Do this in 4 locations along the lower edge of the rib cage (looking for tender spots and touching them tenderly), ending at the side, under the floating ribs.</p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">Repeat 3x</p>	<p>Go back to the midline and repeat the process moving to the left in 4 locations.</p> <p>Repeat on both sides 2 more times.</p> <p>Begin with light pressure, increasing pressure gradually with each repetition. Again, you are looking for tender spots and touching them tenderly.</p>

 <p style="text-align: center;">Repeat 3x</p>	<p>STEP 2: Position your hands on your lower right abdomen next to the pelvic bone, beginning out to the side. With each exhalation, press down for a count of 6. As you inhale, move up the abdomen, pressing during exhalation in several locations until you reach the ribs. Return to the pelvic bone and move in toward the center slightly.</p> <p>Go up the abdomen to the ribs again with a series of deep, relaxed breaths. Repeat a third time just to the right of center. This follows the course of the ascending colon.</p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">Repeat 3x</p>	<p>Then, beginning at the center of the upper abdomen, just below the tip of the sternum, press <i>down</i> the midline to the pubic bone, using the same breathing pattern as above. Make 3 more passes downward, each further out to the left. This follows the course of the descending colon.</p> <p>Repeat the entire sequence 3 times, up on the right side, down on the left, beginning with light pressure, and increasing it slightly each time.</p>

STEP 3. Return to any areas where there was more pain or tension. Again exert pressure on these spots during exhalation, going up to, but not beyond what you can tolerate. The same areas will tend to be sore day after day, but with consistent attention, these spots will become less sore and sensitive. A relatively healthy person will find the abdomen free of reactive areas within 2 to 4 weeks of consistent self-massage.

If you find an actual lump or mass in the abdomen, have it checked by your health care practitioner. You can also work with it yourself, but do not press directly on the center of it. Rather, search for sore or sensitive spots on the edge, and exert pressure at these locations.

STEP 4. Massage around the belly button. See page 3.

STEP 5. Return to the center of rib cage again and make one more pass, first under the right side, then the left.

With consistent application, this practice will result in better bowel movements, appetite and digestion, and therefore more abundant energy. Perform it directly upon waking and before going to sleep.

Once the abdomen is pain free, the massage can be done every few days. If you are under extra stress, eating poorly or otherwise out of balance, then pain or tension in

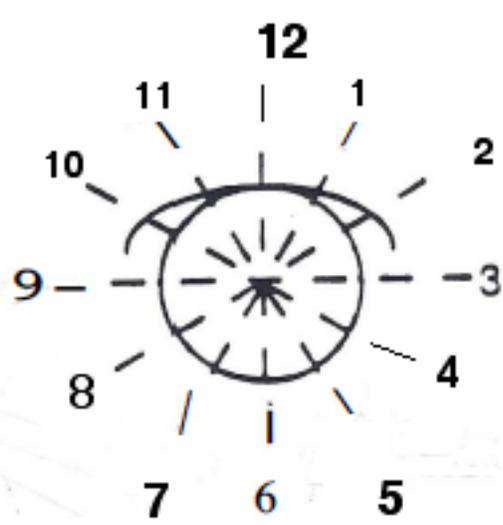
certain areas may return. Extra attention will then be needed to re-establish balance.

In Japanese medicine, sensitive spots, lumps and tension in the abdomen are seen as precursors to more serious disease. Even though one may be otherwise symptom free, abnormalities in the Hara indicate that some disease process is beginning to take shape. If one eliminates these irregularities, the disease process can be turned around.

Kiiko Matsumoto's **Belly Button Massage**: Your belly button as a clock

As you look down at your own body, you will view the clock as though it's superimposed on top of your belly button. (So 12:00 is at the top and 1:00 is to your left going around from the left down to 6 at the bottom. As you go up on the right, 11:00 is to your top right.

Gently massage the most tender areas by applying pressure at a 45° angle up to a depth of 1- 1 ½ inches, then sliding the finger directly underneath the navel. Do each knotty, tense or tender area 1-2minutes every day.

	<p>12:00 Spleen deficiency (digestive ability)</p> <p>1:00 tight muscles in neck & shoulders pulling up chest muscles</p> <p>3:00 blood sugar imbalances</p> <p>4:00-5:00 adrenal overload, overwhelming stress or shock</p> <p>6:00 Spleen deficiency (your Chinese Spleen-Pancreas digestion/absorption function)</p> <p>7:00-8:00 adrenal overload</p> <p>9:00 immune system overload, fetal toxins, allergies</p> <p>11:00 tight muscles in neck & shoulders</p>
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For more information about Hara massage, see *Hara Diagnosis: Reflections of the Sea* by Kiiko Matsumoto and Steven Birch and *Nine Ounces: A Nine Part Program for the Prevention of AIDS in HIV Positive Persons* by Bob Flaws.