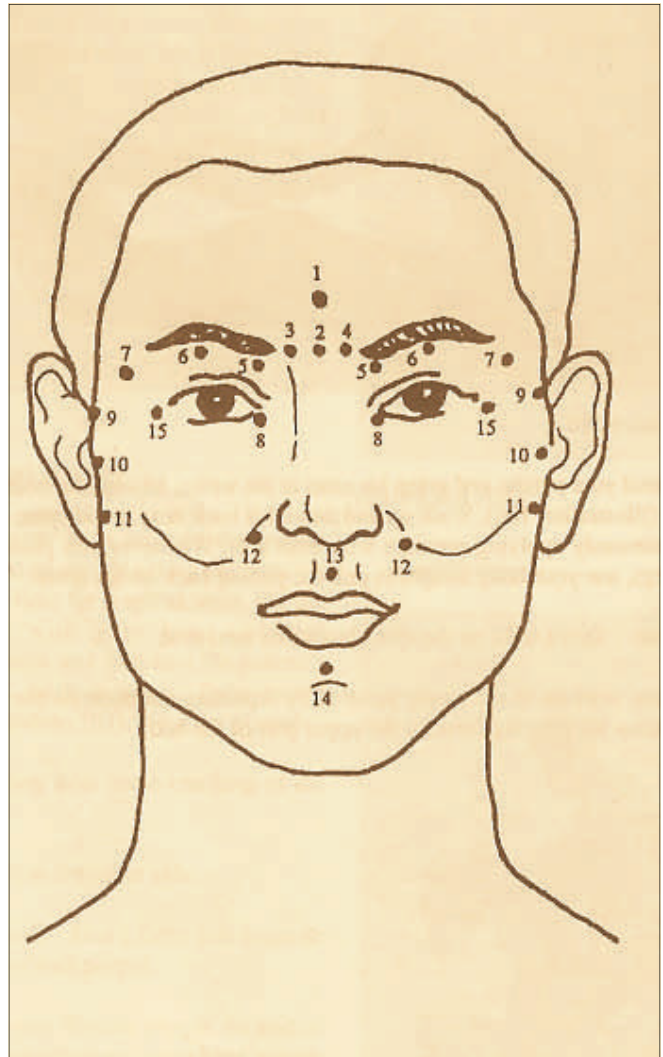


## Working the face in traditional Thai massage

Perhaps nowhere is it more relaxing to be touched than the face. A face massage, when sensitively administered, can be a time for the receiver to completely let go. Thai massage is an active type of healing, and the receiver often participates in the dynamics by holding the practitioner's hands, twisting and turning, breathing and moving in coordinated patterns, etc. But it is at the end of the session, when all the movement has ceased, when we traditionally work the face and the head. At this point, the client is ready and able to fall into deep relaxation, and to achieve a state of body and spirit which is very suitable for the closing of a Thai session. Work sensitively, and be aware of the flow of your movements.

— *Bob Haddad, Editor*



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## Some Important Acupressure Points on the Face

The illustration on the previous page shows some important acupressure points which may be worked during a face massage.

**Point 1:** The ‘Third Eye’; in the Sanskrit terminology of Yoga it is called the Ajna Chakra. It is the sixth of the seven main energy centers in the body.

**Point 2:** Therapy point for headache, insomnia, problems of the lower sinuses, and dizziness.

**Points 3 & 4:** Therapy points for headache and facial paralysis.

**Points 5:** Therapy points for headache.

**Points 6:** Therapy point for facial paralysis and hypothermia.

**Points 7:** The temples. One of the most important and effective therapy points for headache. Also good for facial paralysis.

**Points 8:** The tear ducts. The best therapy for insomnia—and absolutely harmless, with no side-effects. Throw away your sleeping pills! Soft pressure on the tear ducts (sustained for up to one minute or more and repeated several times) is also excellent for relaxing the whole body. Only very gentle thumb pressure is necessary.

**Points 9, 10 and 11:** Small depressions next to the upper and the lower edge and the middle of the ear. Therapy points for deafness, ear pain, and toothache.

**Points 12:** Therapy points for problems of the lower sinuses and for facial paralysis.

**Point 13:** The ‘unconsciousness point’. (An important point in Chinese acupuncture as well, where it is called ‘*renzhong*’). This is the Thai therapy point for faint, shock, sunstroke, and respiratory failure.

**Point 14:** Therapy point for facial paralysis.

# How to Give a Good Face Massage

Sit behind the patient in a comfortable posture. Your client's head may be resting on a pillow on the floor.

For a good face massage you need calm hands and a lot of sensitivity. The kind of face massage I give is gentle and calming. Some practitioners work quite rough and hard on the face. I see no point in that except in certain therapies where hard massage is necessary. Follow your intuition and your feelings.

The acupressure points introduced in the illustration are a guideline. Start with caressing finger movements on the whole face. If your hands are cold, first rub them together to warm them up.

When working the forehead and eyebrows, use your thumbs, and always remember to move towards the temples.

**Caution:** If you haven't checked before, ask whether the patient is wearing contact lenses. If yes, omit touching the eyelids.

Move with your thumbs around the eyes, covering Points 5, 6 and 15. Cover the tear ducts with light pressure.

Work along the upper and lower jaw with gentle pressure and with rubbing movements.

Play with the ears. The ears contain 115 acupressure points for the entire body. Cover the ears by cupping them for 10-15 seconds, which is very relaxing. (We can close our eyes when we are tired but when do we close our ears?)

Make caressing movements on and around the temples. Repeat parts of the face massage as often as you like. Just use your imagination, and follow your intuition.

As the 'grand finale' I suggest that you hold the 'Third Eye' (point 1) for at least one minute with very gentle pressure.

You will be astonished how easy it is to create heaven on earth for your partner if you show a little bit of sensitivity.

— *Asokananda, 1990*