

What a pressure point is and its significance in self-defense.
York Karate-do Green Belt Exam

Prepared by Andrea Lombardi © York Karate

A pressure point is a tiny spot (about the size of the tip of a ball-point pen), on the body where a message can be directly sent to the nervous system via a specific meridian (energy-carrying pathway). Pressure points exist on the body where a minor nerve connects two or more major nerves, or where major nerves are connected. Also, pressure points are considered to be the gates of Chi energy, with each point (except the MUE points) lying on a specific meridian. These meridians in turn, are associated with a specific bodily organ. There are 3 ways to activate a pressure point: press/push, rub, or hit. The area of activation is about the size of a quarter.

The significance of pressure points in self-defense is great. First, when pressure points are used in conjunction with self-defense techniques, the result is much more effective than simply using self-defense techniques on their own. Thus, if a person performs a self-defense technique using pressure points on an attacker, that person will increase his/her chances of escaping efficiently.

Second, when used properly, a lot of pressure point techniques only temporarily shut down a specific part of the body, leaving no visible or long-lasting effect on the body. This means that it would be very difficult for a victim attempting to defend himself/herself against an attacker to be held legally responsible for the defense technique he/she used against the attacker.

Third, when used properly, pressure point techniques do not draw blood from the individual they are performed on. This means that a victim could employ pressure point techniques on an attacker without fear of contracting any blood-carrying pathogens.

Fourth, when properly used, pressure point techniques level the playing field in combat. This means that in a combat situation, large people and smaller people have an equal chance of inflicting damage upon each other. Pressure points are more easily found and more easily activated on large people than on smaller people.

Finally, when properly used, pressure point techniques are a safe and humane method of defending oneself from physical attack. For this reason, using pressure points is a better alternative to using blunt force trauma.

(The Karate-do Website and class notes were consulted in order to formulate this answer.)

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