

5 Needle Protocol: The People's Protocol

(aka NADA, Acu-Detox, Ear Acu-Wellness)

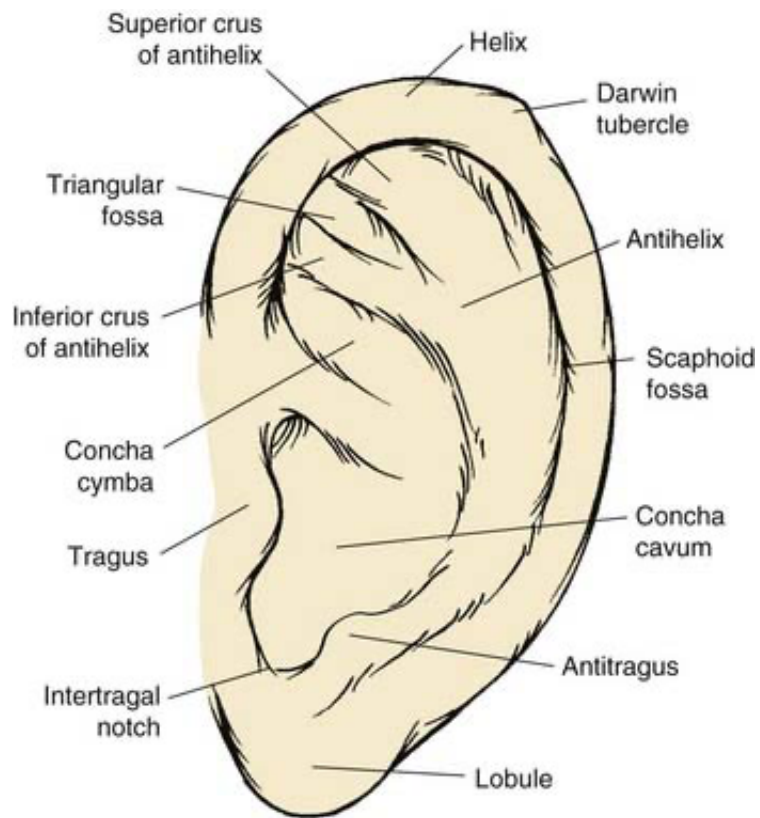
The 5 Needle Protocol (5NP) consists of 5 points needled in each ear. The ears are innervated by the vagus nerve, which means that stimulating any point in the ear engages the body's rest-and-digest and social engagement systems, both of which are crucial in shifting out of trauma and chronic stress responses including fight, flight, freeze, fawn, and/or dissociate.

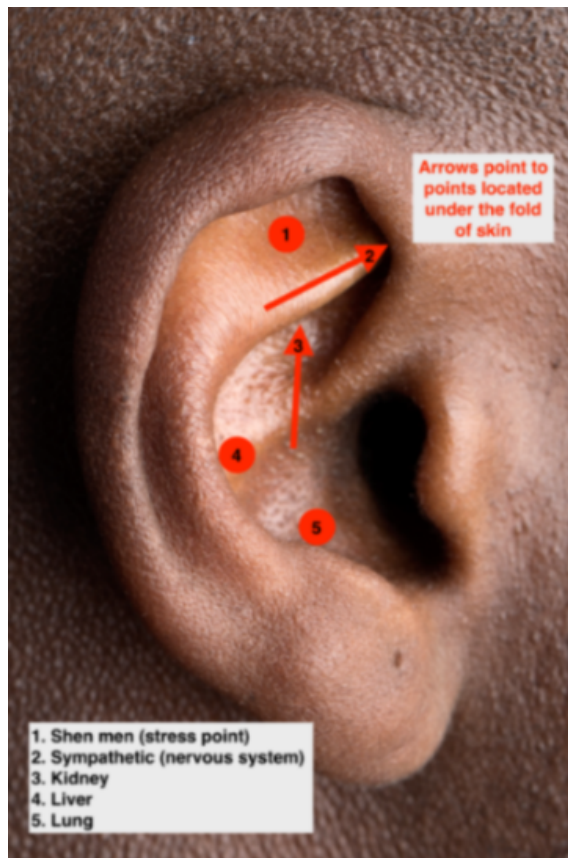
Some people can only tolerate one needle in one ear; some prefer ear seeds to needles; many like to get all 10 needles. 5NP is flexible in that recipients are likely to experience its effects with any of these techniques. 5NP can be administered in a variety of different settings, but is most effective in group settings, given the resonance that happens when groups of people sit together with the shared goal of rest, recovery, and healing. The protocol as a whole has been shown to support people through cravings, withdrawal, recovery, stress, anxiety, trauma, insomnia, and pain.

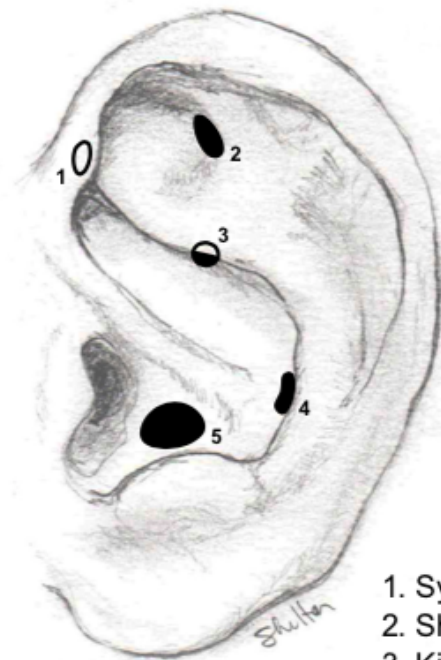
**5NP is not a standalone treatment for addiction recovery or trauma and works best when incorporated into a treatment program or setting where people are accessing community support and other resources.*

The five points are sympathetic, shen men, kidney, liver, and lung. The kidneys, liver, and lungs are the primary organs of detoxification according to biomedicine. You don't have to understand each point individually for this treatment to be effective, but we are including some information about the indications of each point in this manual. [And here's a link to a document that has the ear anatomy pictured alongside the points.](#)

While the same words are used, in the traditional east Asian medical theories that the below information is drawn from, the Lungs, Liver, and Kidneys don't necessarily refer to the physical organs, but to a cluster of physical and emotional bodily functions.







1. Sympathetic
2. Shen Men
3. Kidney
4. Liver
5. Lung

Sympathetic

Point Location: Locate this point by following the line of the inferior antihelix crus. Tucked under the rim of the helix at its intersection with the inferior antihelix crus, this point is not visible on the outer ear.

Needle Technique: Insert the needle parallel to and along the inferior crus.

Possible needling challenge: If the rim of the helix is folded so close that it touches or almost touches the inferior antihelix crus – start with the tip of the needle at the superior helix crus and then slide it inferior to get the tip beneath the rim.

Indications: Helps shift the nervous system from a sympathetic (fight or flight) dominant state to a parasympathetic (rest and digest) state.

Shen men (spirit gate)

Point Location: The point resides in the triangular fossa. The area runs from

just inside the tip of the “U” to one-third of the way along the superior antihelix crus, under the rim. To find Shen Men visualize the posterior and superior U-shaped edge of the triangular fossa. Drop into this U-shaped area from the superior antihelix crus about one-third of the distance the top to bottom edge. Often described as where a fish’s eye would be if the triangular fossa was a fish head.

Needle Technique: The needle should be inserted either perpendicularly into or at a slight angle to the point.

Possible needling challenge: If the triangular fossa is difficult to identify, use a location that is directly in line with the Kidney point, at the half-way point between the lower edge of the inferior helix crus and the superior edge of the superior helix crus. If the triangular fossa is hidden or difficult to distinguish because of a large helix that folds over the superior crus, locate the point on a line superior to the Kidney point.

Indications: Stress relief, relaxation, calms the brain, supports emotional processing. Helps with anxiety, depression, and insomnia.

Kidney

Point Location: This hidden point lies within the superior cymba concha under the anti-helix ridge, directly inferior to the point Shen men.

Needle Technique: Insert the needle at a 45° angle from vertical pointing towards the top of the head. Think of the needle shaft hanging downward like a “bat in a cave.”

Indications: The kidney system is related to fear. This point supports the adrenal glands which are often overstimulated by chronic stress.

Liver

Point Location: The liver point can be found by following the concha ridge all the way to the wall of the cavum concha. The area above or below that point is where the liver point should be needled. (The practitioner will often need to visually imagine where the concha ridge would extend to the wall of the cavum concha if it did extend all the way to the wall)

Needle Technique: The needle may be inserted perpendicularly or at a slight angle to the ear. Take precautions not to needle completely through the ear.

Indications: The liver is related to anger and irritability, so this point supports emotional flow and helps relax muscle tension. The liver is also a primary organ of detoxification.

Lung

Point Location: The large area of this point is found in the middle of the lower region of the cavum concha inferior or just superior to the Heart point (in the middle of the deepest area of the cavum concha).

Needle Technique: Visually locate the deepest, most central portion of the cavum concha (the Heart Point) and insert the needle just below in line with Shen Men and Kidney along the axis of the ear (or just above the Heart point for the alternative location). Often the highest point on the anti-tragus can be used as a landmark to guide the needle into the inferior concha and directly to the Lung point.

Indications: The lung is related to grief and sadness. It also regulates the skin (another primary organ of detoxification).