

The Right Kind of Pressure



Photo: Tom O'Neal

Mothers and entrepreneurs Carla Falcone and Romy Taormina developed acupressure wristbands, known as PsiBands, to alleviate nausea.

It's not pleasant to talk about, or think about, but it's even less pleasant to experience. For those who suffer from motion sickness, morning sickness, or nausea due to other reasons, such as chemotherapy, the queasy feeling is pure misery. Although, in rare instances, it can be bonding.

Local women Carla Falcone and Romy Taormina shared a friendship and intense morning sickness during both of their pregnancies. Taormina found relief by wearing "ugly" grey elastic-and-cloth acupressure bands on her wrists, a tip she recommended to Falcone.

"She threw me a baby shower," Falcone says, "and said, 'Too bad the bands don't match your outfit.' We both said, 'We should make something more fashionable.' We looked at each other and had this moment and said, 'We're going to be on "Oprah!"'"

Falcone and Taormina contacted a friend of theirs, product designer Pieter Schouten, and the three quickly developed the concept for a new acupressure product: PsiBands. Taormina explains Psi is pronounced sigh, as in "sigh of relief."

"Acupressure has been used for more than 500 years as a drug-free form of relief," she says. "There were already acupressure bands on the market, but they weren't water-proof, they weren't adjustable, and they weren't stylish."

After the idea was conceived, Falcone had a fortuitous connection with Long's Drugs.

"I was at my weekly mommy's group with my son, and one of the women casually mentioned that her father-in-law was the CEO of Long's," she recalls. "They connected me to the right person, and from there, it was all about the product."

Last fall, Long's picked up PsiBands. The plastic bands come in fun prints, colors and designs, and have a dial that allows for the

wearer to adjust the pressure. The bands also adjust at the wrist, to accommodate both children and adults. They retail for around \$14.99 for a set of two.

PsiBands are designed to be worn on both wrists to be most effective, and if placed two-and-a-half finger widths above the wrist crease, Taormina says, trigger acupressure point P6. She suggests putting the bands on before a potentially nausea-inducing event, such as a boat or car ride. She says feedback has been hugely positive, including a feature on the website DailyCandy.

"If you've experienced nausea, you know it's debilitating," Falcone says. "We want to tie in a philanthropy in the near future so we are not only helping with bands but we are also giving back to communities and organizations (that help people with conditions related to nausea, such as cancer). We need to share the wealth."

To learn more about PsiBands, visit www.psibands.com.

—Brett Wilbur