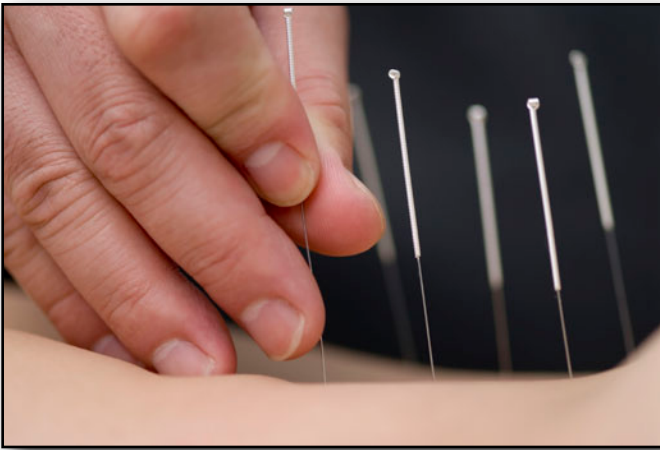


# What is Acupuncture?



Acupuncture is a traditional form of Eastern medicine that is practiced throughout the world. Traditional acupuncture treatment consists of specific assessment of a patient's health, followed by insertion of very fine needles at specific points on the body depending on the patient's needs. These specific points are called acupoints, which are sited near nerve endings, and are connected to one another by lines called meridians or channels. A meridian is the course along which a similar group of acupoints are located. Points that are on the same meridian are concerned with treating a particular organ and its associated structures as well as influencing other meridians. There are 14 main meridians.

The insertion of needles at precisely defined acupoints has two principle effects. Firstly, acupuncture stimulates nerves, which transmit electrical impulses to the spinal cord, brain and to the diseased area. Nerves control most processes in the body. For example, once stimulated some nerves will increase the movement of the intestines; others will retard it. Some will increase and others will decrease, the flow of digestive juices. The same principle holds true of the increase or decrease of the heart rate; the expansion or contraction of the blood vessels; the flow of tears; the tone of muscles; the growth rate; the production of mucus; the turgidity of the skin; the secretion of hormones etc. The nervous system may be compared to the electronic control of some highly complex machine such as a computer. The most important objective for the body is to maintain itself within normal vital parameters. This is called homeostasis or balance.

Secondly, it has been shown that acupuncture releases chemical substances from the brain centers and pituitary gland. These substances are known as neurotransmitters, such as, enkephalins, endorphins, serotonin, dynorphin and

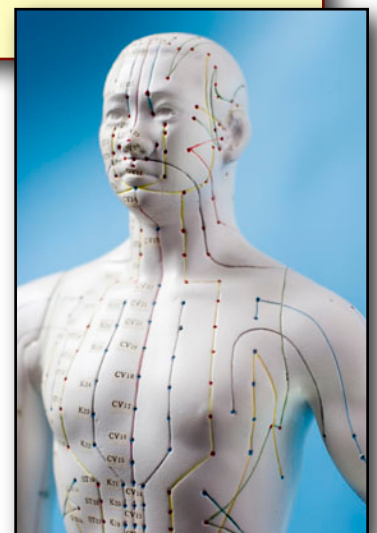
others. They are released and carried in the blood stream, and are the body's own mechanism for communication and pain relief.

These two main effects of acupuncture, nerve stimulation/communication and chemical substance release, may be broken down into six more specific areas in which acupuncture is influential in regulating. Specific combinations of acupuncture points may produce an analgesic or pain relieving result, sedation, homeostatic (regulatory) action, immune-enhancing effect, anti-inflammatory/anti-allergic effect and/or psychological action other than sedation.

Eastern medicine explains that Qi (pronounced 'chee'), the energy of life, flows along the acupuncture meridians just as blood flows along the blood vessels, and it is the uninterrupted flow of this energy which keeps human beings alive (and healthy). If this energy is impeded in any part of the body disease will be the result. The acupuncturist aims at re-establishing the normal flow of Qi by stimulating certain strategic points. Perhaps the flow of Qi along a meridian and the flow of electrical energy along a nerve, are two different ways; one ancient and one modern, of expressing the same idea.

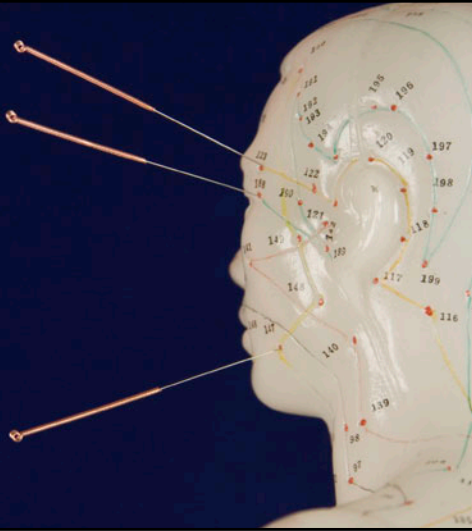
## Did you know?.....

- Acupuncture is taught at every medical school in the U.S.
- Acupuncture has been used by Kings, Queens, Mother Theresa, Castro, Buddha and the Pope to name a few.
- The World Health Organization has recommended acupuncture since 1979.
- Russian cosmonauts are trained in Acupuncture so they don't need medication.
- Richard Nixon is credited with bringing acupuncture to North America.
- More research has been compiled on Acupuncture than any drug on the market.



## DURATION AND RESPONSE TO TREATMENT

Acupuncture is not, in the average case, a one-session treatment. It is an accumulative process. The average pa-



tient with a chronic disease of several years duration requires about 10 to 12 weeks of treatment to achieve optimum amount of improvement. Mild diseases may need fewer treatments, while severe diseases might require more. Chronic health issues may require maintenance acupuncture at 6 to 8 week intervals, after a set course of treatment. 'Incurable' disorders may need life-long treatment and proper management throughout.

Approximately three quarters of the patients who are treated notice a response at the first treatment; usually within seconds or minutes of the needles being inserted. Others will notice this initial response after several hours or even several days.

The initial response is often heralded, either by an increase of general energy and awareness, or by a feeling of pleasant drowsy relaxation. As a rule the depressed patient feels more energetic, and the over-tense patient more relaxed. Thereafter, patients may observe that some of their symptoms have disappeared, but with every treatment the improvement will be more pronounced and of longer duration. Improvement follows an irregular course, some treatments help more than others, until finally by a cumulative effect, they achieve the optimum result.

## REACTIONS AND COMPLICATIONS

Rarely, some patients experience a reaction after treatment and temporarily feel worse. This is more likely to happen after the first treatment, than subsequent ones. The reaction may manifest itself as an aggravation of the

patient's usual symptoms or sometimes merely as fatigue. This usually passes in a few hours. These patients often (paradoxically) have excellent results.

In order to avoid the possibility of fainting during acupuncture the patient is advised to have a regular meal prior to treatment. It is also a good practice to remove all metal jewelry during the acupuncture treatment as these metals may interfere with the body's natural energy flow during treatment.

## METHODS OF TREATMENT

There are many different acupuncture methods, such as, needling, laser-therapy (the use of lasers), electrotherapy (the use of electricity), moxibustion and homeopuncture. Moxibustion is the heating of acupuncture points by holding burning Moxa leaves over strategically chosen acupoints. Whereas, homeopuncture is a unique combination of acupuncture and homeopathy using medicated needles.

Acupuncture is a complete system of medicine, with a range of applications just as wide as that of western medicine. A doctor who combines western scientific medicine with acupuncture can therefore select the most appropriate treatment in any particular case. The doctor will be able to treat a wide variety of diseases of any part or system of the body, including many psychological conditions. Purely structural damage such as a broken bone, cannot be dealt with by acupuncture except for the relief of pain. However, acupuncture anaesthesia may be carried out to do the surgery, as well as to expedite the healing of bone.

## ACUPUNCTURE RESEARCH

More research has been conducted to illustrate the effectiveness of acupuncture than any of the drugs available on the market today. Thousands of studies support the results of Acupuncture.

With more sensitive imaging techniques, recordings of brain reactions during acupuncture are now giving a visual understanding of the physiological changes taking place during acupuncture treatment.

