

Pain Relief: Can You Say Acupuncture?



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Are you experiencing acute or chronic pain? Does constant, dull pain seem to be your best friend? Do you find pain to be debilitating? Does it drain your vital energy? Are you tired of taking drugs? Should you try acupuncture for relief?

Pain can come from many sources. The Chinese believe that pain is caused from blocked or stagnant qi (pronounced "chee", meaning the body's vital energy) and blood. Qi and blood can become blocked due to many things. A few of these are:

- physical trauma
- emotional trauma
- chemical, physical and emotional stress
- poor posture and overwork
- inherited weakness of Qi

When the body's qi is blocked and no longer moves freely, the individual will experience pain. Pain is the body's warning signal. When you experience this, your body is sending you a message that something is wrong. Think of pain as an alarm. Learn to listen to the alarm, don't cover it up with drugs!

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), which includes the use of acupuncture, medicinal herbs, moxibustion and cupping, is an ancient system of health care that has proven very effective in managing pain. In fact, many recent studies funded by the National Institute of Health show that acupuncture is as or more effective in relieving pain than many medications. One specific study reported in the *Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, (Sept, 2003) concluded that electro-acupuncture was better than drugs for the treatment of migraine headaches. Another study, published by the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* (Nov 15, 2003) found that acupuncture reduces pain levels in cancer patients. Other types of pain treated successfully with acupuncture include:

- Back, hip and leg pain
- Fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue
- Arthritis
- Shoulder and neck pain

- Knee pain
- Menstruation pain and cramping
- Sports injuries

You may ask, how will an acupuncturist reduce my pain? An acupuncturist will take a complete health history to determine the cause of your pain. He or she will talk to you but more importantly they will listen to you. They will feel your pulses, look at your tongue and also examine you to determine what is causing your Qi to be blocked. The acupuncturist will then develop a treatment plan, tailored to your specific symptoms. The plan will address the root cause of your pain as well as the elimination of your symptoms. Your acupuncturist will then insert fine, sterile, disposable needles in points which are selected to break up the blockages that are causing your pain. Once the blockages are removed, your qi and blood will be free to move about your body and pain will be reduced.

Your acupuncturist may also suggest additional therapies to enhance your treatment and speed your healing. Therapeutic massage, Chinese medicinal supplements, reiki, meditation and yoga all support the body's ability to heal itself.

Try it, what have you got to lose, maybe your pain?