



Back Pain Relief with Acupuncture



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Americans pay big for back pain. It costs us over \$15 billion a year for medical care and disability payments. It is the fifth most common complaint we take to our doctors, and it is estimated that between 70-85% of us will suffer from acute or chronic back pain at some time in our lives. That's the bad news.

The great news is Acupuncture, part of a 2,500 year old medical system originating in China, is highly effective for back pain. And to top it off, these treatments are simple, safe, and have no side-effects.

When you first see your Practitioner of Chinese Medicine, he or she will often take a detailed history of your health and back pain, trying to find any underlying causes for your condition. Your practitioner might feel your pulses and look at your tongue in addition to palpating your area of pain. You might be asked about your diet, your emotions and quality of your sleep. While this might not seem to be important, Chinese Medicine takes a holistic view of health and will pay attention to all signs of imbalances, be they physical or emotional.

The acupuncture needles used here in the United States are very thin, sterilized and used only once before being properly disposed of as medical waste. The needles are not hollow, but smooth and solid allowing for near-painless insertion and removal. No substances are introduced in to the body with the needles, as with hypodermic needles.

Practitioners are highly regulated healthcare providers, following all the regulations and protocols this unique medicine requires. The safety of acupuncture has been demonstrated over time allowing practitioners to help people without serious side-effects other treatments may have.

There are several styles of acupuncture that might be used. I have listed here just a few.

- 1) **Meridian Balancing (Master Tan's Balance Method)** This is a unique style of acupuncture which uses just a few needles to balance the affected area or meridian that is in pain. Needles are placed away from the affected area or distally. Often there is immediate relief of 50-90%! Although the pain will most likely come back, we can continue to treat for several treatments until the pain has diminished or is gone.
- 2) **Motor-Point Acupuncture (Master Callison's Enegetics of Structural Balance)** Another unique style which uses the western concept of using motor points of agonist and antagonist muscle groups to regain structural balance in the affected area. Highly effective with several treatments and used by professional athletes worldwide to heal injuries and remain in competitive shape.
- 3) **Japanese Style Acupuncture** – A style of very light and gentle acupuncture with very few needles that move the energies of the body very deeply to regain health.
- 4) **Five-Element Acupuncture** – Practitioners focus on dealing with the underlying causative factor of your condition and your unique constitution to resolve health issues.

Your practitioner might also use different treatment modalities in addition to acupuncture. These can include:

- 1) ***Moxibustion***; the burning of mugwort and/or other herbs over or on the affected area to reduce pain, increase blood flow, and warm the area.
- 2) ***Cupping***; the use of a vacuum created in a glass or plastic cup to produce suction to pull deeper stagnation out of the body. Many find this very relaxing.
- 3) ***Gua Sha***; Often known as coining this consists of scraping the affected area with a coin or other instrument to bring up stagnation to the surface where it can be released by the body.
- 4) ***Herbal packs or poultices***; Placing an herbal formula on an affected area. The herbs are often pain relieving, warming and blood moving herbs.

- 5) ***Internal Herbal Formula***; A tailored formula to treat you and your specific complaint. It can often supplement what acupuncture does, essentially extending the length and effectiveness of the acupuncture.

Depending upon the severity of your condition the practitioner will have you return for treatment once, twice, or three times a week until the symptoms have diminished greatly. After that you will discuss a treatment plan to stabilize your progress and reduce your chance of a relapse.

When an experienced practitioner outlines a treatment plan it is wise to follow it. Years of training and practice allow practitioners to judge very quickly the type of progress you will make based on a few sessions. The most likely cause that someone says acupuncture doesn't work is because they didn't get enough treatment to stabilize their progress. This is easily the most common mistake newcomers to acupuncture make.

Practitioners of Chinese Medicine here in the United States are some of the most highly trained in the world, and approach their profession with the utmost integrity. Our accredited universities offer graduate and post-graduate degrees of 3000-4200 hours which include both stringent academic and clinical training. After gaining either state or national board certification practitioners are required to attend at least 50 hours of approved continuing education every two years to maintain their licensure. On top of that most serious practitioners obtain professional liability insurance and participate in local, state, or national professional organizations.

While this medical system may seem foreign to you it is most sought after in the United States with more than 3 million U.S. adults had used acupuncture in the last year. More and more people are trying Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine as a way to resolve their pain and health concerns in a safe, natural and effective way, **and this medicine delivers.**

Questions? Feel free to call Joy Acupuncture Health Centre at 619-322-4492 or e-mail Jocelyn Joy, MS, L.Ac at jocelyn@joyacupuncture.com

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