

British Acupuncture Council

The British Acupuncture Council is a professional organisation for acupuncturists. Members must have completed an extensive training course in acupuncture. The BAcC maintains standards of education, ethics, discipline and practice to ensure the health and safety of the public. Members are bound by the Council's Codes of ethics, practice and professional conduct.

For more information about the BAcC you can visit the website at: www.acupuncture.org.uk, or use the address or telephone number below:

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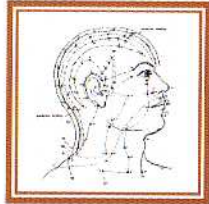
Traditional
Acupuncture

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What is Acupuncture?



Acupuncture is a form of healing that has been used for thousands of years in China and other Eastern countries. Millions of people continue to use acupuncture as a powerful but gentle way of restoring and maintaining health.

Chinese philosophy sees the body as a network of interacting energies. The body's energy, or **Qi**, circulates through a network of channels, or 'meridians'. The even distribution and flow of **Qi** maintains health, while depletion, interruption or stagnation leads to disease.

The flow of **Qi** can be disturbed by a number of factors. These include emotional states such as:

- **Anxiety**
- **Stress**
- **Anger**
- **Fear**
- **Grief**

other factors include:

- **Poor nutrition**
- **Weather conditions**
- **Hereditary factors**
- **Infections**
- **Poisons**
- **Trauma**

The aim of acupuncture is to work with the body's natural tendency to correct itself by influencing the flow of **Qi** in the meridians to restore a smooth and even flow.

Along the meridians lie acupuncture points, and when a fine needle is inserted into a point the flow of **Qi** is affected. This can stimulate a healing response and help restore balance. The focus of acupuncture is on improving the overall well-being of the patient, so that they feel better on all levels:

- **Physical**
- **Emotional**
- **Mental**
- **Spiritual**

Who can benefit from Acupuncture treatment?



Almost anyone can benefit from acupuncture treatment. The focus of acupuncture is on improving the overall well-being of the patient, rather than isolated treatment of specific symptoms. Many patients report that they feel better 'in themselves' after treatment, as well as noticing an improvement in the symptoms that prompted them to consult an acupuncturist.

In Western medical terms, acupuncture can be effective in a wide range of conditions, including:

- **Bone, muscle or joint problems:** including arthritis, backache, sciatica, tennis elbow and frozen shoulder.
- **Cardiovascular disorders:** including angina, high or low blood pressure.
- **Gastrointestinal disorders:** including irritable bowel syndrome, colitis, duodenal and gastric ulcers, crohn's disease.
- **Gynaecological and obstetric problems:** such as discomfort in pregnancy and as an aid to labour, premenstrual syndrome, period pains, menopausal symptoms such as hot flushes, insomnia and mood changes. Also increasing fertility naturally or as an adjunct to IVF treatment.
- **Mental / emotional problems:** including anxiety, depression, insomnia and addictions.
- **Respiratory disorders:** including asthma and hayfever.

Many people also have acupuncture as a preventative treatment, or because they feel unwell in themselves, but are not 'ill' in the Western sense.

What happens during a consultation?



Your first visit to an acupuncturist is generally the longest, lasting about 90 minutes, because the practitioner needs to make an initial diagnosis. To do this she will take a detailed case history, and will also feel your pulses in both wrists, and look at your tongue. She may do further physical examination if this is appropriate. The treatment involves insertion of fine stainless steel needles into acupuncture points. There are points all over the body, but those in the forearm and lower leg are the most frequently used.

Another method used for stimulating acupuncture points is to apply heat using a herb known as moxa. This is burnt either on the ends of the needles, or directly over the skin (in which case it is removed before you feel any discomfort). How often you come for treatment will vary according to individual need, but people often have weekly treatments to start with, and visit less often as their condition improves.

Does it hurt?

Acupuncture needles should not cause pain when they are inserted. However, there is a 'needle sensation' that you may feel as the needle contacts the **Qi** at the acupuncture point. This may be a dull ache, a pulling sensation, a tingling, a feeling of numbness radiating from the needle, or occasionally a sharper pricking sensation. When this occurs it should not last more than a second or two.