

Six Health Benefits of Acupuncture



By Chicago Chiropractic & Sports Medicine

Acupuncture is a family of procedures involving stimulation of anatomical locations on or in the skin by a variety of techniques. There are a number of approaches to diagnosis and treatment in American acupuncture that incorporates medical traditions from China, Japan, Korea, and other countries. The most thoroughly studied mechanism of stimulation of acupuncture points employs penetration of the skin by sterilized thin metallic needles, which are manipulated manually or by electrical stimulation.

The following health benefits of acupuncture have been demonstrated in many peer reviewed research studies.

1. Reduced pain
2. Control of anxiety/depression
3. Management of headaches
4. Improved fertility
5. Decreased asthma symptoms
6. Improved allergy symptoms

Acupuncture has been shown to be an effective and safe form of treatment and co-management of a wide variety of conditions. Research suggests that acupuncture can be effective on both a local and systemic level. Acupuncture has been demonstrated to increase endogenous opioid concentration, increase blood flow, reduce both heart rate and blood pressure, and has been hypothesized to stimulate neurologic and endocrine changes systemically.

It's very common for patients to receive acupuncture to treat musculoskeletal pain. One specific example was a patient that I treated for Plantar Fasciitis. The patient had a history of chronic foot pain that was worse in the morning and after being on her feet for long periods. The patient had been through a variety of treatments including physical therapy, cortisone injections, orthotics, and pain medicine. To her disappointment, none of these approaches had been effective.

After a thorough functional evaluation and physical exam, I found that the patient was "flat footed" and had a history of ankle and knee injuries from years of tennis injuries combined with a lack of conditioning. She had become frustrated that she couldn't play tennis which had served as her form of exercise and stress reduction for so many years. The mechanical nature of her excessive foot mobility had likely caused the history of injuries and was also causing the tissue on the bottom of her foot to become inflamed. A more rigid arch would absorb normal foot forces, but in her case the excessive mobility of the arch was causing the soft tissue in the bottom of her foot to abnormally absorb forces. I decided that we would begin acupuncture treatment 2x per week for 4 weeks until her pain was gone. The goal of the acupuncture treatment was to disrupt adhesion that had accumulated in the soft tissue of the bottom of the foot while simultaneously reducing the pain. After 4 weeks, the patient's pain was gone and we were able to advance to physical therapy and proper foot wear with orthotics. In this case the patient was able to return to playing tennis on a regular basis and remain pain free.

It's important that patients pursue conservative treatment for common conditions. Conservative treatments like acupuncture reduce risk of side effects while lowering health care costs. Schedule a consultation with Chicago Chiropractic and Sports Medicine to learn more.