

Acupuncture and Arthritis



If you live with arthritis, you know what a challenge it can be to find relief from joint pain and other symptoms. But there are many things you can do to manage and control your arthritis and live a healthy, active life. Acupuncture and Chinese medicine can be a powerful addition to any treatment plan—without causing harmful side effects.

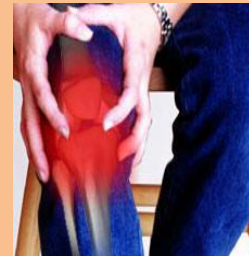
Arthritis according to Western Medicine

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common type of arthritis, affecting more than 21 million Americans. It occurs when the cartilage between the joints break down, usually affecting the hips, hands, knees, low back, and neck. Some factors can increase your risk, including joint surgery, being overweight, aging, and genetics. Putting stress on a joint through repetitive motion can also increase your risk.

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is another common type, affecting 2.1 million people in the United States. This chronic condition occurs when the lining in the joints becomes inflamed and can lead to long-term damage and even loss of movement. Women are two to three times more likely to get RA.

RA often starts in the hands or feet, and it usually affects the same joints on both sides of the body. Symptoms include:

- Warm, swollen or tender joints
- Joint stiffness, especially in the morning
- Fatigue
- Flu-like symptoms, such as fever
- Muscle pain
- Weakness



Treatment options

Treatment generally focuses on relieving pain and preventing further joint damage. Often this is done through the use of anti-inflammatory drugs and other medication, as well as through self-care and physical therapy. In some cases, surgery may even be needed.

Acupuncture offers a safe, natural way to control joint pain and other symptoms and maintain overall health. In fact, a 2004 study showed that patients with OA of the knee experienced a 40 percent decrease in pain and a 40 percent increase in function after receiving a series of acupuncture treatments.

It's important to remember that there is no “quick fix” for arthritis, and it may take time and effort to achieve results. By working closely with your acupuncturist and other treatment providers, you will be taking charge of your arthritis—and taking a step toward a healthier life.

