

Acupuncture and Back Pain



Back pain is a very common problem--one that will strike four out of five Americans at some point in their lives. In fact, it's one of the top reasons people seek medical care. Unfortunately, back pain isn't always easy to diagnose or relieve. Low back pain in particular can become a chronic, or ongoing problem. Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) are very effective in treating back pain, naturally. They can also be used together with traditional Western treatments to maximize your healing and recovery.

How back pain happens. There are many possible causes for back pain, such as strained muscles or ligaments, often caused by improper lifting, sudden movements or traumatic injury. Other culprits can include arthritis, structural abnormalities of the spine, or when the disk between the vertebrae bulge or rupture and press on a nerve. Depending on the specific diagnosis, back pain is generally treated with medications, physical therapy, chiropractic care, and in some cases, surgery.

A more natural approach. Practitioners of acupuncture and TCM view back pain another way. An acupuncturist will not only work to relieve your symptoms, but will also work to find and treat the underlying cause of your pain. In a study conducted at a Swedish hospital, doctors concluded that acupuncture provided long-term relief along with improvements in physical activity levels, better sleep, and the diminished use of pain medications.



Acupuncture and TCM are based on the concept that Qi (chee), or the body's Vital Energy, flows through the body in channels called meridians. If Qi becomes stagnant, unbalanced, or deficient, symptoms such as back pain, ache, and inflammation can result. This can happen for any number of reasons; from illness and injury to stress, or external invaders such as wind and dampness. Back pain can arise from disharmonies such as:

- Stagnation type pain which is often linked to sudden, stabbing, severe pain and related to sprains, strains, or trauma. It can be accompanied by stiffness and tightness and becomes worse with rest. If it occurs often in the same area(s) it may reflect an underlying deficiency.
- Cold, damp obstruction type which is generally worse in the morning and worsened by cold or damp weather. This type of pain condition may be associated with numbness, swelling, and a sense of "heaviness." Heat improves this condition.
- Deficiency type pain which is usually a chronic condition that presents with a dull pain and improves with rest.

More and more people are finding relief for both acute and chronic back pain through acupuncture and TCM. If you or a loved one is struggling with back pain, call today to find out how acupuncture can help.