

The point of acupuncture

Acupuncture with a trained and fully qualified practitioner is one of the safest and longest established forms of healthcare. It is suitable for people of all ages, including pregnant women and children, and can be used effectively alongside conventional medicine.

An acupuncture treatment involves the insertion of very fine needles into specific points on the body. Your acupuncturist will diagnose which combination of points is right for you after a detailed consultation covering every aspect of your health and lifestyle, as well as your symptoms.

Acupuncture is widely used and accepted all over the world, both as a stand-alone treatment and in combination with other forms of medicine. In the far east it features in mainstream healthcare.

To learn more about acupuncture, speak to a BAcC registered acupuncturist who will be happy to discuss how it can help you.

You can find acupuncturists in your area at www.acupuncture.org.uk or contact the British Acupuncture Council on info@acupuncture.org.uk or 020 8735 0400.

This leaflet is also available in large print on request

British Acupuncture Council

With over 3,000 members the British Acupuncture Council (BAcC) is the UK's largest regulatory body for practitioners of traditional acupuncture. The BAcC is a founder member of the Professional Standards Authority Accredited Voluntary Register (AVR) and maintains high standards of training, safe practice and professional conduct.

Acupuncturists registered with the BAcC carry the letters MBAcC after their name. When you choose to visit a BAcC member you can be sure of:

- extensive training (minimum three years degree level), including anatomy, physiology, and other appropriate elements of western medicine
- adherence to the Council's Codes of Safe Practice and Professional Conduct
- compliance with current health and safety legislation
- full medical malpractice and public/products liability insurance cover
- up-to-date knowledge and skills maintained by mandatory continuing professional development
- Many BAcC members undertake postgraduate study of common health conditions including pain management, cosmetic acupuncture and acupuncture for children.

You can find your local BAcC practitioner by using our practitioner search at www.acupuncture.org.uk or contact us on info@acupuncture.org.uk or 020 8735 0400 for a free list.

British Acupuncture Council

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Practitioner details:



British
Acupuncture
Council



Acupuncture for you

All you need to know to make
the right choice



Acupuncture works

Members of the British Acupuncture Council (BAcC) practise acupuncture based on Chinese medicine principles that have been researched and refined for over 2,000 years.

The first acupuncturists developed a comprehensive system of diagnosis based on detailed observation of the human body. Without the help of modern scientific equipment, the first acupuncturists discovered many now familiar aspects of biomedical science, such as the impact of emotional stress on the body.

Acupuncture regulates the flow of qi around the body through pathways called meridians. In recent years medical scientists have discovered myofascial pathways that follow the meridians recorded by the early acupuncturists, and the concept of qi itself may overlap with developing knowledge of how cells in the body communicate.

What is the evidence?

Evidence of acupuncture's effectiveness is growing as researchers evaluate the best ways to measure how the body responds to it. To date the focus has been on pain management. Around the world, clinical studies are being conducted to understand how acupuncture can be beneficial for many more conditions. You can read factsheets about the latest acupuncture research at www.acupuncture.org.uk

Can it help me?

Acupuncture is considered to be beneficial for a wide range of conditions. NICE, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence recommends acupuncture on the NHS for migraines and headaches. The respected Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) recommends acupuncture for chronic pain, including low back pain and knee pain. Because an acupuncture treatment is designed to affect your whole body, not just your symptoms, you may notice other niggling problems resolve during a course of treatment. Your local BAcC acupuncturist will be happy to discuss how acupuncture can help you in a free consultation over the phone.

Who has acupuncture?

A lot of people have acupuncture to relieve specific aches and pains, such as osteoarthritis of the knee, TMJ, headaches and low back pain, or for common health problems like an overactive bladder. Some pregnant women have acupuncture throughout their pregnancy. Other people choose acupuncture when their bodily functions are out of balance, but they have no obvious diagnosis. And many have regular treatments because they find it so beneficial and relaxing.

What happens when I go for treatment?

A BAcC acupuncturist will use many diagnostic methods to put together an individual treatment plan based on your state of health and lifestyle. They will take a complete medical history, read your pulses, may examine the site of your symptoms and look at your tongue. Acupuncture needles are inserted at points selected to affect your whole body, as well as your symptoms, and you will be left to rest for a while before they are removed. The single-use sterile needles come in sealed packs that should be opened in front of you and are safely disposed of after each treatment.

What does it feel like?

Acupuncture needles are so fine that most people don't feel them being inserted. It is normal to feel a mild tingle or dull ache as the acupuncturist adjusts the needle to direct qi. Many people feel deeply relaxed during the treatment.

Is it safe?

Two research studies conducted in 2011 and 2012 concluded that when practiced by properly trained and qualified traditional acupuncturists, such as members of the BAcC, the risk of adverse events from acupuncture is extremely low.

Does it have side effects?

Sometimes a small bruise can appear at a needle site. Occasionally, people can feel dizzy or tired after a treatment but this passes quickly.

Should my doctor know?

If you have been prescribed medication we recommend you tell your doctor that you plan to have acupuncture. Do not stop taking your medication. You should tell your acupuncturist about any medication and supplements you are taking. BAcC acupuncturists are trained to recognise potentially serious underlying health conditions and will refer you to your GP if they consider it appropriate.

How many sessions will I need?

Your BAcC acupuncturist will discuss this with you. Weekly treatments are normal to begin with, reducing in frequency as your body responds. The effect is usually felt within five or six treatments. Occasionally just one or two treatments are sufficient.

How much does it cost?

Prices vary around the country, between practitioners and clinics. Your BAcC acupuncturist will be happy to discuss fees with you before booking a treatment.

Can I get acupuncture on the NHS?

Many BAcC members work within the NHS in specialist clinics and GP surgeries. Acupuncture is recommended for the treatment of migraines and tension-type headaches on the NHS, and in Scotland more generally for chronic pain. However, not all GPs refer patients for acupuncture treatment.

Will my health insurance pay for acupuncture?

Most health insurance policies cover the cost of treatments with BAcC registered acupuncturists. You should check with your insurer directly.

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