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Increasingly, people are looking for more natural approaches to help relieve painful conditions instead of relying on medications. Acupuncture has no side effects and can be helpful for all types of pain, regardless of what is causing the pain or where the pain is located. Some studies have shown the pain relief it provides can last for months.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the brain before and after acupuncture treatment for pain shows dramatic decreases in brain activity--up to 70 percent. This decrease in activity in certain areas of the brain is thought to be the reason why acupuncture treatments reduce pain.

In addition to reducing pain, acupuncture also hastens the healing process by increasing circulation and attracting white blood cells to an injured area.

The basis of acupuncture is expressed in this famous Chinese saying: "Bu tong ze tong, tong ze bu tong," which means "free flow: no pain, no free flow: pain."

In other words, any kind of pain or illness represents an obstruction in the normal flow of Qi, or life force. Simply put, acupuncture moves Qi, restoring free flow.

Studies on Acupuncture and Pain

Acupuncture has become readily accepted as a viable option for pain management and studies support its therapeutic effects.

In a German study, published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 1,162 adults with chronic, lower back pain were divided into groups treated with either acupuncture or the standard pharmaceutical and exercise therapy commonly used in conventional medicine. Researchers reported that acupuncture provided relief and lasting benefit to nearly twice as many lower back pain patients compared to drugs and exercise. Forty-eight percent of the acupuncture patients reported at least a one-third decrease in pain along with improvement in their ability to function, versus 27 percent of the patients treated with conventional methods reporting such benefits.

In another recent study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, researchers from the University of Maryland School of Medicine analyzed 33 studies covering more than 2,100 patients from around the world on acupuncture for lower back pain. They found acupuncture provided definite pain relief in the short-term (defined as relief sustained for three weeks after the end of the acupuncture sessions).

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine is a viable treatment option for chronic pain, lower back pain,



- **Relieve Pain Naturally with Acupuncture**
- **That's The Point!**
- **Chronic Lower Back Pain Relief**
- **Acupuncture for Post Operative Pain**
- **Get Relief from TMJ**

Acupuncture is excellent for managing post-surgical side effects such as surgical pain, loss of appetite, and upset stomach or nausea. In addition to strengthening the immune system and increasing energy, acupuncture is also a great way to reduce swelling, decrease stiffness and pain, reduce scarring and scar tissue and speed up recovery.

Research from Duke University Medical Center has shown that acupuncture can significantly reduce post-operative pain and their need for powerful opioids to treat pain.

Duke University anesthesiologists combined data from 15 randomized clinical trials to reach their conclusion. Using acupuncture both before and after surgery produced the best results for patients, who reported lower levels of post-operative pain and a significantly reduced need for painkillers. In addition, acupuncture mitigated the negative side effects of opioids when they were used.

musculoskeletal pain, arthritis pain, headaches and post surgical pain. Whether your symptoms are just beginning to crop up, or you are looking for a more natural approach with less side effects, acupuncture and Oriental medicine can bring relief.

If you or someone you know suffers from chronic or acute pain, call today to see how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help you.

Some of the most effective points to use in acupuncture are local points of tenderness. These points are referred to as Ah Shi points, which in Chinese literally means "That's the point."

Ah Shi points are especially effective in the treatment of pain and are often used in conjunction with local and distal acupuncture points.

Ah Shi points were first mentioned during the Tang Dynasty (founded in 618 AD) in the classic book *Thousand Ducat Prescriptions*. These points become spontaneously tender when disease or injury occurs, or in locations where Qi has become congested. They are not among the regular acupuncture points on a specific meridian or pathway.

Ah Shi point locations are not fixed; they are the points that, upon palpation, are the most sensitive. In many cases a small knot or pea sized nodule can be felt under the skin at these points of tenderness.

If you have pain, palpate around the area of pain to see if you can find the Ah Shi points.

Lower back pain is an extremely common concern, affecting anywhere from 75 to 90 percent of people at some point in their lives. Lower back pain is second only to the common cold as a cause of lost days at work, and it is one of the most common reasons to seek medical care, including acupuncture. In fact, one of the top reasons that people get acupuncture treatments is for lower back pain.

Despite the large number of pathological conditions that can give rise to lower back pain, up to 85 percent of cases are classified by physicians as 'non-specific'. When lower back pain is examined from an Oriental medicine perspective, it is seen as a disruption to the flow of Qi within the area and associated with a specific disharmony, and it is treated accordingly.

The disruption of Qi that results in lower back pain is usually associated with the following three disharmonies:

Weak Kidney Qi

In Oriental medicine, the lower back is referred to as the "dwelling of the Kidneys." The majority of chronic lower back pain conditions are associated with Kidney deficiency. Pain related to Kidney deficiency is typically dull and erratic. It is usually aggravated by fatigue and improves with rest.

Stagnation of Qi and Blood

When the flow of Qi along the meridians that traverse the lumbar region becomes congested, it is referred to as the stagnation of Qi and blood. This presents with a severe stabbing pain that is worse with rest and better with movement, tenderness to touch and can be accompanied by stiffness and tightness.

"The most important outcome for the patient is the reduction of the side effects associated with opioids," said T.J. Gan, M.D., the Duke anesthesiologist who presented the study at the annual scientific conference of the American Society for Anesthesiology in San Francisco in October 2007.

Gan pointed out that acupuncture is a relatively inexpensive therapy that has virtually no side effects when practiced by trained professionals.

Temporomandibular joint and muscle disorders are problems or symptoms of the chewing muscles and joints that connect your lower jaw to your skull. Patients suffering from temporomandibular joint disorders can find relief from acupuncture.

Research conducted at the Ribeirão Preto Dental School, São Paulo University in Brazil, found that after three months of acupuncture, patients with TMJ experienced significantly less pain, increased strength of their bite and decreased EMG activity of the masticatory muscles.

Source: Rancan SV, Bataglion C, Bataglion SA, Rêgo Bechara OM, Semprini M, Siéssere S, de Sousa JPM, Crippa JAdS, Hallak JEC, and Regalo SCH. The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine. December 2009, 15(12): 1307-1310. <https://doi.org/10.1089/acm.2009.0015>

Invasion of Cold and Dampness

Cold, damp type pain is generally worse in the morning and when the weather is cold and damp. This type of pain improves with movement and the application of heat. Stiffness and contraction of back muscles that is aggravated by immobility indicates cold predominance. Swelling, numbness and a heavy sensation are indicative of dampness.

If you or someone you know suffers from acute or chronic pain, please call to find out more about how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help you.

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