



# THE MANY USES OF ACUPUNCTURE\*

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Did you know that acupuncture care is the fastest growing medical alternative in the US? It's true--and there are good reasons why!

- Acupuncture treats a wide variety of discomforts and diseases.
- It strengthens the immune system and evens out mood, so people can stay well.
- It's a gentle and drug-free medical practice.
- Since patients spend up to one hour at each visit, they can develop a warm and close relationship with their acupuncturist.
- The cost is moderate, it's very safe, success rates are high, and people who use it typically get excited and recommend it to others!

Acupuncture is one of five medical modalities used in East Asian (Chinese, Oriental) medicine--the others are herbal therapy, massage, diet, and meditative exercise (tai chi, Qi gong). Acupuncture typically uses extremely fine flexible needles, or warming herbs, to stimulate acupoints on the body, scalp and ears. Though no one knows precisely how it works (research is getting there!), stimulating the points seems to put the body's energy back into balance, allowing the body to work efficiently and heal itself.

**What does acupuncture treat?** The tiny needles can

- reduce stress and help anxiety, insomnia, depression,
- stop infections (colds, sinusitis, bronchitis, cystitis, acne, many others...),
- treat acute or chronic pain (sprains, arthritis, sciatica, slipped disc, carpal tunnel, achy feet, joints, back, neck, jaw...),
- help allergies, asthma, reflux, indigestion, irritable bowels, headache, gallbladder dysfunction, eczema, psoriasis, menopause symptoms, PMS, infertility, eye and ear issues, addictions (smoking, drugs...), high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and a host of other complaints.

**Here are a few more that may surprise you.** Acupuncture can help:

- neurological disorders such as post-stroke paralysis, MS, Parkinson's disease, tremors, trigeminal neuralgia.
- immune disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, shingles.
- avoid surgery...or strengthen you before surgery and help you recover afterwards. In a national study (1998)\*, of 97 acupuncture users who'd been recommended surgery, 68 (70%) reported avoiding it through acupuncture.

**It's a drug-free practice.** Acupuncture is a good choice for anyone sensitive to prescribed drugs, or who wishes to stop using pharmaceuticals such as antidepressants, antacid agents, NSAIDs or statin drugs.

***It's relaxing.*** Time spent with their acupuncturist in a quiet and nurturing setting was the number one reason patients gave in that same nation-wide survey\*\* for preferring acupuncture care. Most acupuncturists make a point of listening, allowing the patient to fully explain themselves.

***What about those needles?*** Acupuncture needles are not at all like syringe needles! They are as fine as a human hair, sterile, and used only once. Even those with needle-fear can use acupuncture.

***How do I find a good acupuncturist?*** Consult your friends, read local free health magazines, look up your state acupuncture society on the Web, or check bios at sites such as [www.acufinder.com](http://www.acufinder.com), [www.acupuncturesite.com](http://www.acupuncturesite.com). Be sure the practitioner is licensed and nationally board certified. Finally, choose someone you *like*...and be sure that you *feel better* after treatments...or try another acupuncturist.

#### Articles

\*Cassidy, CM 1998a Chinese Medicine Users in the United States, Part I: Utilization, Satisfaction, Medical Plurality. *J Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 4(1):17-27.

\*\*Cassidy, CM 1998b Chinese Medicine Users in the United States, Part II: Preferred Aspects of Care. *J Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 4 (2): 189-202.

#### Book:

\*\*Cassidy, CM. 2002 What Patients Say About Chinese Medicine. Chapter 12 in: *Contemporary Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture*, CM Cassidy, ed., Churchill-Livingstone, Publ, Edinburgh, Philadelphia, pp 223-238.