

# THE ACTIVE LIFESTYLE MAINTAINED WITH ACUPUNCTURE

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We are lucky to live in a land of warm sunshine bordered by the Mediterranean and its marinas, where activities like golfing, cycling, walking, bowling, swimming, sailing and tennis can be enjoyed virtually year-round. The one cloud in the sky is that the pursuit of these pastimes, or more mundane activities like lifting suitcases or shopping, weeding or cleaning, can result in injury.

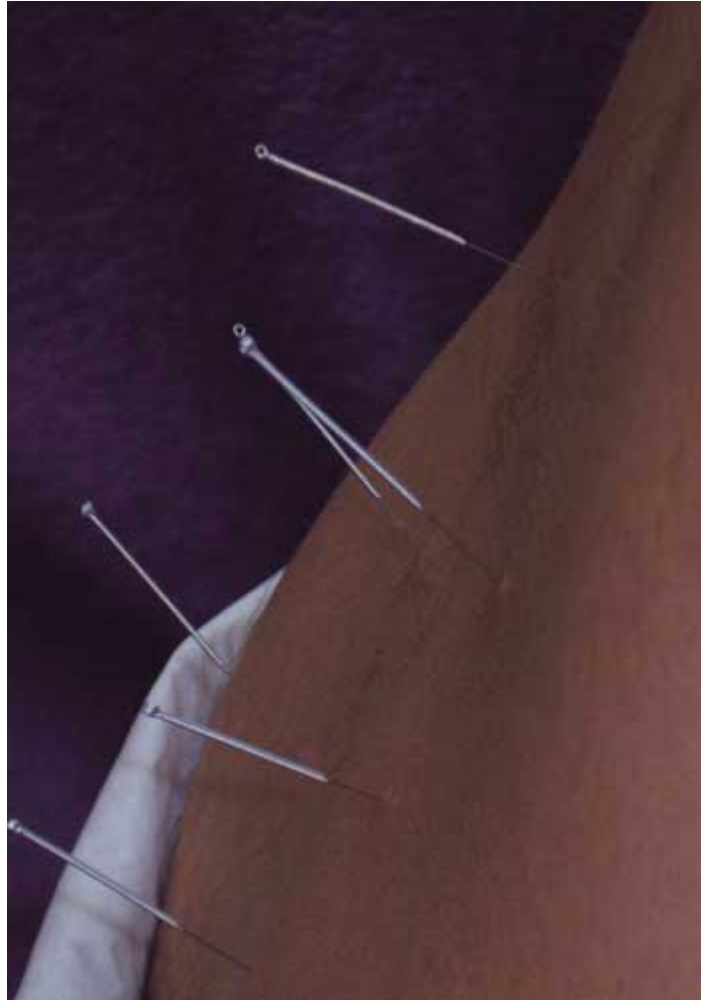
Repetitive movement or overuse is asking for trouble, particularly following a period of inactivity. “Golfer’s elbow” (pain at the tendonous insertion into the bony inner side of the elbow), or “tennis elbow” (the other side), can occur even if you’ve never had aspirations towards the Ryder or Davis Cups! Doctors recently reported a marked increase in lower back, neck and shoulder referrals caused by over-enthusiastic Wii ® participation, and even couch-potatoes suffer ‘gamer’s thumb’! So - how to minimise risk and speed recovery?

## PREVENTION

Unlike cats and dogs after a snooze, we seldom stretch our muscles, mistaking activity for ‘leisure’ or ‘chores’ instead of ‘exercise’. So gym warm-ups and work ergonomics go unconsidered - until suddenly it hurts to move!

Before you get onto the first tee or into the yacht, or liberate the spade or broom, slowly and gently move your arms, neck and back through increasingly full

movements and stretch your calves and hamstrings so you feel more loose and limber. Don't rush it, or you'll end up with a cramp or crick in the neck!



## **CURE**

Your sciatica, tendonitis or bad back has struck you down, and you hope the problem will disappear with some tablets and rest, or perhaps a complementary therapy - massage, physio, osteopathy...

Acupuncture is very helpful for many physical, and indeed emotional, problems, and is a scientifically researched, financially viable alternative to orthodox treatments, as demonstrated in its acceptance by many national health schemes. Those who wrongly believe that it involves fearsome hypodermic-sized needles are amazed at how fine (0.22mm) and flexible modern disposable needles really are. If a patient is needle-phobic, their acupuncturist can offer several pleasant alternatives to stimulate acupuncture points: Moxibustion, a comfortable focused warmth from a smouldering compressed herb; barely perceptible electro-therapy

(a bit like TENS); 'don't-feel-a-thing' acu-laser light stimulation and also acupressure.

A recent injury or severe pain is usually treated twice weekly for four to eight sessions; a chronic ache, weekly. Acupuncture is a holistic therapy, applied after taking into consideration other physical and emotional concerns, thereby treating the whole person, not just a single complaint. This means the majority of people complete their treatment not only pain-free, but also with an enhanced sense of well-being and improved mental focus. Those with chronic or recurrent problems may benefit from one or two 'top-up' treatments every four to 10 months to maintain control of their symptoms, without increasing their reliance on medication.

By 2010, acupuncturists and other complementary practitioners will be regulated in the United Kingdom, but for now, in Spain or elsewhere, whether your acupuncturist follows traditional or Western methodology, ensure they (or any other practitioner) are qualified, registered and insured.