

**Over my series of articles I've explained how acupuncture point stimulation, whether by needles, Aculaser or moxibustion, can alleviate many physical and mental diseases. I've covered digestive problems and 'waterworks', hormonal imbalances, mental stress, muscular and joint pains and strains, respiratory allergies and illnesses, and even facial aging! Hopefully I've dispelled the misconception that acupuncture is just for bad backs and quitting smoking!**

Acupuncture was first documented around 300BC during the unifying reign of the Yellow Emperor in China, but had been practiced for centuries beforehand. As an integral part of Oriental medical treatment, alongside herbalism, it helps a huge panorama of problems.

Meticulous clinical observation over the centuries led to a system of points on meridians (channels), being used to treat the person holistically: body, mind and emotions. Acupuncture works primarily by restoring a healthy balance, boosting energy (Qi), strengthening the immune system and so assisting the person to heal themselves.

Acupuncture affects every physical system in the body: circulatory, respiratory, immune, endocrine, reproductive, digestive, excretory, urinary, nervous, muscular and skeletal. But instead of prescribing different medications for each symptom, acupuncture works cumulatively to enhance and normalise function within and between systems. It uniquely benefits emotional and mental conditions, restoring well-being and assurance in those who know themselves to be 'not feeling well' yet aren't 'sick' as defined by Western medicine.

Acupuncture's therapeutic benefits are well documented, but when it began to be practiced in the West there was - and unfortunately still is - much uninformed scepticism. Orthodox medicine demands scientific trials, yet double-blind controls and 'inert placebo needling' are impossible, as needle, pressure or heat stimulation of any point for the subject under trial will give some effect, leading to skewed results and professorial arguments in journals and popular press! Research has successfully proven that acupuncture stimulates the immune system and the body's naturally occurring painkillers and anti-inflammatories, that it can favourably alter blood pressure and circulation, relax muscle spasm (both voluntary, like a strained back muscle and involuntary, like internal digestive peristalsis or asthmatic bronchi). And it's often preferable to orthodox medicine in relieving specific conditions, e.g., hay fever, hot flushes and insomnia.

I hold a licentiate from the British Academy of Western Medical Acupuncture, but my initial training was Traditional. Postgraduate training has included Korean E-Chim auricular diagnostic acupuncture, so I've a broader perspective than many medically orientated acupuncturists.

I'm delighted to read texts poetically describing a point indication as "rectifying and supplementing heart Qi, clearing the heart and quieting the spirit", clinically satisfied to know that it works, and professionally relieved that several worthy studies on, for example, insomnia and anxiety, significantly statistically prove acupuncture successfully treats in 85 to 100 per cent of cases, with improvement maintained three or more months after treatment, and no recourse to addictive drugs with nasty side-effects.

Acupuncture's only common side-effects are occasional drowsiness during or shortly after treatment, and an overall feeling of increased vitality and well-being thereafter!

By the way, pre-empt the onset of hay fever this spring by booking a course of treatment soon. Make your own physical, mental and emotional health one of your achievable New Year's resolutions. Give acupuncture a try!

ElectroLotus Acupuncture, Health and Beauty.