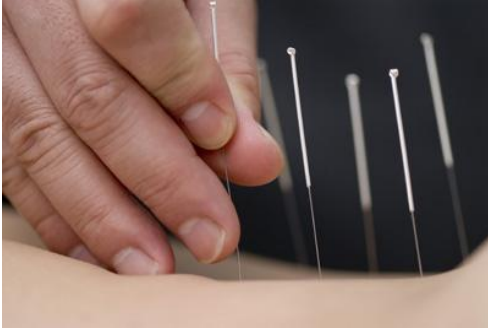


Acupuncture



Acupuncture is a form of treatment that originated in China. It involves the insertion of fine needles into the body, in order to relieve pain, decrease inflammation, and improve physical function. Ancient Chinese practitioners believed that the body contained

channels of energy – or meridians. If energy was unable to move freely in these channels, sickness and pain would arise. By inserting acupuncture needles it was thought that the movement of energy would be restored.

Medical research has demonstrated that acupuncture has a pain-relieving effect on conditions such as:

- Tennis elbow
- Back pain
- Neck pain
- Headaches
- Osteoarthritis

Today, acupuncture is viewed a bit differently by western cultures. Healthcare providers such as physicians, physiotherapists and dentists have studied acupuncture, and use it in their practices. Scientific research into the mechanisms of acupuncture has found that when acupuncture needles are inserted into the body, the nervous system undergoes a chemical change.

Neurotransmitters such as serotonin become elevated during and after and acupuncture treatment. As well, acupuncture has been demonstrated to cause the body to produce pain relieving opiates, or “endorphins” in the brain and blood stream. These chemical changes are thought to be underlying mechanisms for the anti-inflammatory and pain relieving effect that acupuncture produces.

In a physiotherapy setting, an acupuncture treatment is delivered by a physiotherapist who has received additional postgraduate training in acupuncture. The treatment involves the insertion of a small number of needles - even as few as one or two. These needles are positioned in areas that correspond to the client’s injury, as well as the nerve supply to the area being treated.

In addition to the benefit of pain relief, acupuncture is also recognized to have very few side effects. Occasionally there is mild tenderness or bruising at the site of needle insertion. However, a typical acupuncture treatment involves very little discomfort.

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For further information about physiotherapy or acupuncture treatment please contact:

Stonetown Physiotherapy & Sports Injuries Clinic

519.284.2569

www.stonetownphysiotherapy.ca