



Aberdeen Physiotherapy

ABERDEEN PHYSIOTHERAPY

Acupuncture & Physiotherapy

The members of the Acupuncture Association of Chartered Physiotherapists (AACP) have a wide range of treatment methods at their disposal. These include manipulation and massage exercises, heat and ice, electrotherapy and hydrotherapy. Increasingly, some physiotherapists are finding acupuncture an effective complement to their established skills. This leaflet looks at the use of acupuncture by Chartered Physiotherapists and the circumstances in which they use it.

What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is one of the oldest recorded forms of medicine having been used for over 3,000 years in China. There are several theories as to how the effects are produced. The important thing is that it does work and that any side effects are extremely rare. The traditional Chinese view is that Qi energy flows freely when the body is in a healthy state. If there is a problem, energy stagnates. The stimulation of appropriate acupuncture points frees this stagnation.

Research

Research has been able to show that acupuncture stimulates the brain to produce natural pain relieving chemicals / endorphins. These assist the body to heal itself and gain pain relief. There is now increasing scientific evidence to support the effect of acupuncture.

Is Acupuncture Safe?

Acupuncture is safe when practised by AACP members, who are trained to use the strictest hygiene and therefore only use pre-sterilised disposable needles. Other means of stimulating acupuncture points by massage (acupressure), heat, electrical, ultrasound and laser may be used.

Will It Work?

Research has shown that 70% of people gain relief from pain with acupuncture. It does not work for everybody and every condition but, frequently, good results are achieved when more conventional medicine has failed. There is nothing spiritual about it and patients don't need to believe in acupuncture for it to work. The effects of acupuncture are cumulative, with a build up of effects as treatment progresses. Some people are particularly good responders while others may see little benefit until they have had a few treatments; this is more likely with a chronic condition. Occasionally, the condition may become slightly worse at first. This is not a bad sign as it usually means the condition will respond.

Why a Physiotherapist?

Patients are increasingly going to alternative therapists. Chartered Physiotherapists work in co-operation with doctors, keeping them informed and referring back when necessary. AACP members have completed a 3 - 4 year degree course, based on western medicine with particular emphasis on anatomy and neurophysiology. Acupuncture training is undertaken at post-graduate level. All members of the AACP who practice acupuncture are trained to give

pain relief. Those who have taken further training are registered as accredited or advanced members and can include acupuncture in the treatment of many conditions met in physiotherapy clinical practice. Treatment in these cases aims to help the body balance itself and is not just for the relief of symptoms. Chartered Physiotherapists are in a unique position of being able to combine acupuncture with other natural treatment methods, such as exercise, manual therapy and relaxation techniques.

CONDITIONS THAT MAY BE HELPED BY ACUPUNCTURE

- pain, nausea, dizziness
- acute/chronic injuries, sports injuries
- arthritis and rheumatism
- back and neck pain
- breathing difficulties: hayfever, asthma, bronchitis
- bladder and bowel problems
- skin conditions
- headaches
- strokes
- multiple sclerosis (MS)
- woman's health
- stress related difficulties
- muscle and joint problems

It is often worth trying acupuncture for conditions that have not responded well to orthodox medicine.

Where is it Practised?

Acupuncture is practised by physiotherapists in the NHS and private practice. Most private health insurance schemes provide benefits for physiotherapy by Chartered Physiotherapists.

What Should Patients Expect?

Chartered Physiotherapists assess using a detailed examination and plan a treatment programme with their patients. When acupuncture is used it may be combined with a range of other treatment techniques such as exercise and manual therapy and usually will include advice on life style and counselling.

Will it Hurt?

This is the most common question asked by patients when needles are used. When inserted the fine needles give rise to a sensation, which should only be a temporary mild discomfort at the most. At times a more intense sensation is experienced. This is thought to indicate the movement of energy at the acupuncture point.

Summing Up

- Chartered Physiotherapists work in co-operation with the medical profession.
- Acupuncture is safe and virtually painless.
- Chartered Physiotherapists offer a wide range of treatment methods.
- Acupuncture and Physiotherapy combined can be used to treat a wide range of conditions.
- AACP Members are bound by a code of professional conduct.
- AACP sets standards and provides training.

Blood Donation: The National Blood Transfusion Service approves acupuncture treatment provided by AACP members. Ask for a certificate.