



What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is one of the many skills used within physiotherapy as an integrated approach to the management of pain and inflammation. Acupuncture within physiotherapy is used against the background of clinical and research evidence. Clinical research is supporting the effectiveness of acupuncture, particularly in the management of pain. Acupuncture stimulates the nerves in skin and muscle, and can produce a variety of effects. We know that it increases the body's release of natural painkillers - endorphin and serotonin - in the pain pathways of both the spinal cord and the brain. This modifies the way pain signals are received, and therefore helps to reduce your pain.

Does acupuncture work?

Yes, but it does not work for all. Success can depend on a number of factors, which include general health, the severity and duration of the condition and how the condition has been managed in the past.

What does acupuncture involve?

Treatment will consist of the insertion of fine needles. These are high quality, sterilised and disposable ensuring strict hygiene practice. The needle insertion will feel like a mild pinprick and should only give temporary discomfort. No medication is introduced to your body. Once the needles are in place you may feel a mild ache, numbness, warm or heavy sensation at and around the needle. This should not be unpleasant. This is referred to as "De Qi" and is a sign that the body's inbuilt pain relieving mechanisms are being stimulated. Your physiotherapist may gently stimulate the needle until you experience the De Qi. This may be repeated again throughout your treatment. Treatment might be once a week to begin with, then at longer intervals as the condition responds. A typical course of treatment lasts 5 to 8 sessions. It is advisable to eat before treatment.

Is acupuncture safe?

All of our physiotherapists are fully trained in the management of a wide range of conditions and treatment choice will be based on sound clinical reasoning and a holistic view of the presenting problem. Our physiotherapists that use acupuncture are required to train to a minimum standard and are bound by professional codes of conduct. As a procedure that involves inserting needles into the body, it does pose some problems, but these are minimal. Acupuncture has been known to produce some side effects in certain people.

When it should not be used	When acupuncture should be used with caution	Minor side effects of acupuncture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If you have a needle phobia - If you have a metal allergy, specifically stainless steel - If you have a known infection in the area to be needled 	<p>You should inform your physiotherapist if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have haemophilia - Are pregnant or trying to conceive - Suffer from epilepsy - Have a deficient / weakened immune system - Have a heart pacemaker - Are taking anti-coagulant medication - Are diabetic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some needle discomfort - Drowsiness and sleepiness following treatment - Bruising at the needle site - Temporary pain increase - Fainting / feeling faint