

# Different Drummer Acupuncture

Occasional Newsletter



## Athletic Injuries

Exercising is good for your health, but if you participate in sports long enough or hard enough it's likely that at some point you may become injured. Whether these injuries are minor aches and pains or more serious sprains or breaks, your primary goal is to get back to your sport as soon as possible. That's where acupuncture can help. Acupuncture can be used as the primary treatment or as an adjunct to other treatments such as surgery, chiropractic, massage or physical therapy. In either case, acupuncture can relieve pain, decrease swelling, increase the range of motion and speed the healing process so you'll be participating in your sport again sooner.

### The Theory Behind Acupuncture

The Chinese theory and the Western medical theory of acupuncture are often contradictory. For most of us in the West, the Chinese theory is suspect because it is not based on scientific principles and anatomy. However, the Western explanation does not account for all of the proven effects of acupuncture.

The Chinese theory holds that a vital energy or qi (pronounced chee) flows through channels in the body much like streets and highways through a city. When an injury occurs the qi can't flow in its normal manner, just as a car wreck slows traffic. Acupuncture acts to restore the proper flow of qi in the channels, like a tow truck helps to clear the street allowing traffic to move again. However, we don't really know why inserting thin needles at specific points in the body can do this.

That's where Western research has some but not all of the answers. Research has found that acupuncture releases endorphins, our natural pain-killing chemicals. This helps explain why acupuncture works so well on pain, but it fails to explain why acupuncture can help with nausea, something that the National Institutes of Health has claimed. A Chinese doctor quoted in Parade Magazine perhaps sums it up best, "Why should we spend time, money and resources just to convince Western doctors of something we've used successfully for thousands of years?"

### Does Acupuncture also Heal the Injury?

Yes, in addition to relieving pain, acupuncture can assist in healing an injury. Let's use a sprained ankle as an example. Of course, you'll want to do the normal first aid procedures first. Then, if you

add acupuncture treatments your healing time will decrease and you'll be participating in your sport again sooner. Using acupuncture the qi begins to flow again thereby decreasing the swelling and pain. By getting the qi to flow we allow the body's healing mechanisms to work faster.

Acupuncture helps my hip dysplasia



### Are There Other Benefits of Acupuncture?

As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. This spring and summer I treated two patients who were training for the Canadian Ironman. Neither was injured, but with the intensity of their training they definitely were prime candidates for injury. By having regular acupuncture treatments both remained injury-free and successfully completed the 140-mile race. So whether you have an injury or you want to prevent one from occurring, feel free to contact me and we can assess if acupuncture is right for you.

### About Different Drummer Acupuncture



I have been an athlete all my life. I compete as a race walker in road races, relays and marathons. I am also a proponent of cross training (I got an injury from over training), so I swim, weight lift and do yoga to compliment my walking. Athletes are a large part of my practice.

Acupuncture is a midlife career change for me. Previously I worked at Nike. During this time I used acupuncture for a back injury and from personal experience discovered the power in this ancient medicine. I am a graduate of Lewis and Clark College and the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine where I received a Masters degree in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. I have been in practice since 1998.

—Marcia Mueller, L.Ac.

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## Food for Thought

The following foods are good for muscles, tendons, ligaments, bones and joints. These foods are good for arthritis sufferers.

- Sulfur rich foods such as asparagus, eggs, garlic and onions help in the absorption of calcium. Sulfur is used to repair and rebuild bone, cartilage and connective tissue.
- Fresh vegetables, especially green leafy ones\*, nonacidic fresh fruits, whole grains, oatmeal, brown rice, fish, soybean products and avocados are healthy foods.
- Red cherries can relieve pain and inflammation. Twenty red cherries per day is recommended.
- Turmeric, an herb often used in curry, is a great anti-inflammatory and can also help relieve pain.
- Fresh pineapple contains bromelain an enzyme that can reduce inflammation.
- Foods rich in magnesium help increase calcium absorption. Dried seaweeds, beans, whole grains especially buckwheat, nuts and seeds and high-chlorophyll foods contain magnesium.  
Some foods should be avoided, if you suffer from inflammation, joint trouble, or arthritis.
- Nightshade foods such as white potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, and bell peppers should be avoided. They can add to inflammation and contain a substance that can be irritating for people who have arthritis.
- Reduce the amount of fat in your diet, especially from dairy products and red meat.
- Avoid caffeine if possible. Caffeine speeds up the nerve impulses and can intensify pain.
- Also avoid sugar, salt, tobacco and alcohol.

\* Spinach, chard and beet greens contain oxalic acid, which tends to inhibit calcium absorption. If the calcium isn't absorbed into the bones it can be absorbed into the muscles and other soft tissues where it can cause pain and stiffness.

### Cold and Flu Season

Chinese medicine has some great herbal remedies for colds and flu. Some patients like to have them readily available so they can take them at the first sign of illness, others call when they need them. They are available in either a liquid concentrate or pill form.

## Recipe of the Month

This fall soup recipe good for bones and arthritis is from *Healing with Whole Foods* by Paul Pitchford.

### Lima Bean-Turnip Soup

5 inches wakame (a type of seaweed) broken into pieces, then soaked for 3-4 minutes

1 cup of lima beans, soaked overnight or 12 hours

¼ onion, diced (optional)

2 carrots, cut into chunks

4 small turnips, quartered

1 cup cabbage, shredded

5-6 cups of water—use water from soaking wakame

1 Tablespoon miso

Place wakame, beans and water in a large pot and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer 45-60 minutes. Add onion, carrots, turnips and cabbage. Simmer about 20 minutes, until beans and vegetable are tender. Add miso and simmer another 5-7 minutes.

Serves 6.