

Different Drummer Acupuncture

An Occasional Newsletter



Motor Points

Sore muscles are something that we all suffer from at some point in time. If we're lucky the muscle relaxes and heals very quickly. There are times, however, when that doesn't happen and we're sore at best or incapacitated at the worst. Acupuncture is very effective with sore, tight, injured muscles and treating these problems is a big part of my practice.

I like to blend western medical knowledge and techniques with my Chinese medicine training when I treat orthopedic disorders. With painful, sore and/or injured muscles there often will be tight palpable bands within the affected muscle. These points often refer pain to another area of the body and are called trigger points. It has been found that needling these points can alleviate the pain. Doctors often use wet needling and inject an anesthetic, but dry needling (acupuncture) can be just as effective.

There are other points called motor points that are arguably more important in the treatment of muscle pain. Motor points are found at specific sights in the body and they most often correspond to the area where the nerve enters the muscle belly. This is also the area of the muscle that has the lowest resistance to electrical conductivity. Motor point locations are very consistent from person to person so they are easily found in most cases.

Muscle Physiology

There are specialized groups of muscle fibers called muscle spindles that send nerve impulses to the spinal cord when they are stretched. There is another group of cells called golgi

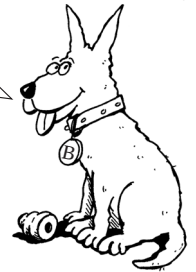
tendon organs located at the junction of the tendon and muscle. These organs protect the muscle from too much tension by sending signals to the spinal cord when pressure is applied, i.e. weight added. When an acupuncture needle is inserted into the motor point it actually can cause the muscle to twitch, which in effect "resets" the muscle spindles and golgi tendon organs thus relaxing or strengthening the muscle. It has also been shown that by treating motor points the trigger points in that muscle relax.

Acupuncture Treatment

Let's say the back of your thigh is very sore and tight after a weekend of yard work. The pain doesn't go away for several days and you're planning to go hiking in a week. When you come in to see me I'll do some manual muscle tests to determine which muscle is malfunctioning. Sometimes we'll find more than one. We might do some range of motion tests as well and we'll test the muscles that are opposite of the one that is sore—in this case the quadriceps. I'll also ask you lots of questions that will help me determine your constitution from a Chinese Medicine perspective. Then I'll needle some points that will help your system in general. After this I will needle the motor points of the affected muscles. We will retain the needles for 15-30 minutes, and then we'll do some stretches if appropriate and retest the muscles. Usually we see improvement. I also will give you some stretches and/or exercises to do at home. If possible I like to treat injuries two times per week until resolved. The number of treatments depends on the severity of the injury; sometimes one treatment is enough, other times six or more treatments might be necessary.

I hope you don't hurt yourself this spring! But if you or someone you know gets hurt, give me a call and I'll help you on the road to recovery.

Check out my picture on the website!



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Spring Foods

In the Chinese 5-element tradition spring is associated with wood and the color green (think plants coming to life). It's also associated with the liver and gall bladder organs. Those organs, especially the liver, are used to help detoxify the body. Just as you might do some spring-cleaning around your home, you can also do spring cleaning of your body by eating foods that can facilitate internal cleansing.

In spring it is best to limit salty foods because salty is the flavor for winter and it tends to bring energy down. Pungent and sweet flavors are good flavors to use in the spring because they have expansive and rising qualities, which mirror what is happening in nature in springtime. Herbs such as basil, fennel, rosemary and marjoram fall into this category, as well as whole grains and legumes. Fresh young carrots, beets, new potatoes and other starchy vegetables are also good spring foods. Instead of slow cooking, try stir-frying or lightly steaming your food in the spring. This way the foods will retain their spring freshness.

Chinese Noodle Soup

From Healing with Whole Foods by Paul Pitchford

2 cups noodles, cooked and drained
4 cups vegetable broth*
1 carrot, sliced
1 green onion, chopped
2 cups spring greens, finely cut
1/2 cup sprouts
Sea salt to taste

Heat broth. Add carrots, onion and salt. Simmer 10 minutes until verging on tenderness. Add greens and cook until bright-colored. Serves 4-6.

Variation: Hot and Sour Soup
Add lemon juice or vinegar with hot sauce.

*The store bought broths, even the organic ones, are very high in sodium. If possible, make your own broth. An economical and simple way is to use vegetable scraps and ends and cook them slowly for 1 hour. Strain and squeeze out the broth. There are also low sodium broth cubes available.



Marcia Mueller
Lic. Acupuncturist

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.