

Tips for Choosing the Right Acupuncturist

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Acupuncture provides a highly effective way for people to heal themselves naturally. It stimulates, strengthens, and balances the flow of vital energy (*Qi*) throughout the energy pathways (*meridians*) of the body. Acupuncture also works by removing blockages and stagnation of *Qi* within the meridians to restore health as well. In addition, an acupuncture recipient taps into, connects and accesses their innate healing ability through the experience of a treatment making positive results even more likely.

During an acupuncture session, a recipient is provided with the opportunity to balance their system on a deep, profound level providing impetus for the creation of vibrant health and wellbeing. The results vary based upon the willingness of the recipient to heal themselves combined with the presenting state of their physical and energetic health picture. Just because acupuncture doesn't work for you for one problem doesn't mean it won't help for the same or another one that may arise at a later date. Our bodies change throughout time and one's readiness for healing is a variable as well. One may have not been ready or able to release a problem or symptom at one point, but may be totally ready at another point in time.

The experience of an acupuncture treatment can also vary based upon the particular acupuncturist providing the treatment. In other words, not all acupuncturists are created equal. Just because one acupuncturist fails to obtain positive results, doesn't mean another acupuncturist wouldn't. There are many different ways that an acupuncturist can guide a patient toward a more positive, healing experience. Other than the obvious factor of needling approach and technique, some additional factors to look out for include the way they present themselves, speak to the patient, respond to patient questions, the manner of providing treatment, the environment of their treatment space, the music played, as well as how their employees run the office and answer the phone. All of these variables affect how you feel as a recipient of acupuncture and thus affect treatment results.

A primary goal of acupuncture treatment is for the patient to develop and find a way to connect with and own their healing. An acupuncturist must serve as a guide in this process, even though some acupuncturist may want to try to take sole credit for results. An acupuncturist is gently prodding the patient to self-heal through the insertion of needles. They are not doing the healing as it is the patient themselves who is responsible for their own healing. Therefore, it is

advisable to seek an acupuncturist who gives the patient responsibility and credit for their own healing process.

An acupuncturist should take time to explain this and several other things during the initial consultation. It's not uncommon for a patient to be apprehensive during their first visit simply because it is a new experience. If a recipient is nervous about receiving acupuncture the first time the acupuncturist should be sensitive to their needs. An acupuncturist can choose to say and do things to help the patient feel more comfortable to allay their fears. For example, it needs to be explained that one's fear will quickly dissipates as soon as they experience a surprisingly, painless first needle. They should also be told there could be an occasional needle that is "*a zinger*", but most of the time it is a pleasant experience.

Prior to receiving the treatment, the acupuncturist also needs to explain that sometimes a needle starts "to smart" during a treatment signifying the release of a Qi blockage. An acupuncturist should warn the patient that this could happen and instruct them to breathe deeply into the area for a few minutes until the discomfort dissipates. Additionally, if the patient is uncomfortable for any reason, there should be a call button or a bell to summon the acupuncturist to their room. An acupuncturist should do their best to be there for their patients - close by, and ready to be of assistance in all ways. This creates a safe and nurturing environment where the patient can access the best and strongest healing possible.

During the actual treatment, an acupuncturist may find it helpful to talk to the recipient to keep their mind from focusing on what is happening. They could also suggest that the patient may find it easier to close their eyes during the needling. Rather than closing the door of the room after the needles are inserted, an acupuncturist can offer to leave the door open and check in occasionally for an added comfort level for the duration of the treatment.

Creating the space for a patient to go deep into a state of healing during an acupuncture session is extremely important. Setting a proper stage enhances the chance for the patient to make the necessary energetic/physical shifts to move toward a more perfect state of health. Because a healing environment sets the stage for a successful acupuncture treatment, it is essential that it provide amenities to ensure safety, peace, and comfort. The more the patient can relax, the better the treatment will work. Some suggestions during the treatment time for this include being cognizant of creating soft lighting or darkness, elimination of loud, irritating sounds to uphold the maintenance of quietude, providing the right pillows for comfortable positioning, a accessible method to alert the practitioner, setting the room at a comfortable

temperature, offer of blanket or other covering, and choice of pleasing music.

Chinese medicine teaches that strong needle stimulation provides the most benefit, but my experience has proven differently especially for those that are “*needle-shy*.” The proper amount of needle stimulation can make or break the success of acupuncture and can change from treatment to treatment and patient to patient. An acupuncturist must pay close attention and be sensitive to the not only the appropriate amount of stimulation needed to treat a particular condition, but also the needle tolerance of the recipient. If a patient is extremely sensitive, stimulation can be given ever so gently or even eliminated altogether with excellent treatment results. In this case, the mere insertion of the needle is enough to provide sufficient Qi stimulation. Other patients with a more robust constitution, in turn, may require strong stimulation to achieve desired results.

During a time when more and more people are seeking the expertise of an acupuncturist has arrived. Acupuncture is an excellent method to prod the body into a perfect state of health, balancing the energetic system to ward off stagnant or stuck Qi. Because disease is believed to happen on an energetic level first, keeping the energetic system open, flowing and working properly through regular acupuncture treatments is an excellent addition to one’s overall healthcare plan. However, this must happen with an acupuncturist that can be trusted to provide the best care possible. Having more knowledge as to what this might entail will help you to have a better acupuncture experience – a way to keep your energy flowing freely and abundantly, a gentle and sure way “*to become unstuck!*”

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