



# Natural Addiction Recovery



## Through Chinese Medicine

by Shoshanna Katzman

As an addiction recovery aid, Chinese medicine addresses the individual needs of each person. This is especially useful as addiction affects everyone differently. This age-old treatment approach has literally become a “life-saver” for many in today’s American culture where addiction has become a serious problem compounded by the enormous challenges of maintaining successful recovery – one plagued with a high incidence of relapse.

Acupuncture has been found to significantly increase the odds for a meaningful recovery involving drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and even food. The fact that acupuncture treatments allay the physical symptoms associated with both addictive behavior and the detoxification process is what makes it so enormously effective and essential as a recovery aid. It is thus highly recommended as an integral part of addiction recovery along with other supportive treatment protocols such as individual or group psychotherapy, 12 step programs, and other social, psychological or healthcare services showing promise in this area.

Scientific research has shown that acupuncture increases levels of endor-

phins, the body’s natural pain relievers that are known to be helpful for withdrawal symptoms. For example, those successfully ameliorated with acupuncture include excessive cravings, agitation, anger, irritability, digestive discomfort, depression, insomnia, sweating, irritability, anxiety and panic. Furthermore, acupuncture treatment not only promotes relaxation, inner balance and a sense of peace, it also creates immediate as well as long term relief for withdrawal symptoms.

Chinese herbs are also an integral part of an addiction recovery program in combination with acupuncture. In fact, two London hospitals are investigating the effect of Chinese herbal medicine in controlling the craving for drugs. There are studies being conducted to test the effectiveness of an extract from the Chinese herb kudzu being used to reduce the desire for alcohol. And the Chinese herb by the name of bupleurum works to eliminate cravings, reduce anger and balance the energetics of the liver – all important results for addiction recovery success.

In addition to physical symptoms, both acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine address the root energetic cause of addiction. The first step to

ensure success of treatment is to determine a Chinese medicine diagnosis and establish the underlying cause of the addictive behavior. Quite commonly this stems from a pattern of energetic disharmony involving the vital organs of the liver, heart and kidneys.

Chinese herbal formulas and acupuncture points are then used to re-establish proper energetic flow and balance throughout these meridian pathways. Treatment typically focuses on reduction of excess such as energetic disharmony known as “liver fire excess”, combined with strengthening of deficiency such as “heart blood deficiency” or “kidney yang deficiency”. Acupuncture points to treat addiction are primarily located on the ear, and locations throughout the body are also chosen to further support the person’s individual needs. Both acupuncture and Chinese herbs help to restore calm, will power, clear reasoning, improved decision-making, and enhanced sense of direction in life.

The unique perspective of this Chinese medicine approach enhances positive outcomes stemming from both energetic and physical shifts to dramatically change a person’s self-damaging behaviors. For example, instead of using a stimulant to lift one up or a depressant to calm one down – acupuncture and Chinese herbal treatments are being used for energetic balancing, renewed energy boost, and re-establishing self-control. It is imperative to seek the help from qualified, licensed Chinese medicine practitioners.

Chinese medicine treatment calms the heart and spirit, nourishes the nervous system, promotes relaxation, relieves anxiety, supports detoxification, strengthens vital organs; as well as releases and resolves fear, grief, anger, irritability and frustration. These profound healing results effectively provide the fortitude to navigate life with a renewed sense of health and wellness.

*Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S., is the author of Qigong for Staying Young, co-author of Feeling Light and the director of the Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center in Shrewsbury, NJ. For more information, visit [www.healing4u.com](http://www.healing4u.com)*