

Say Goodbye to Low Back Pain

The important thing for a person to remember is that their body possesses an innate healing capability. .

by Shoshanna Katzman



Throughout the centuries, people have known through personal experience that low back pain can be relieved through acupuncture. For so long, the main way folks would know this to be true has been through word of mouth. Fortunately, the media has been singing the praises of acupuncture for years now, providing help to countless people who would otherwise still be suffering. It is thus a major step

in the right direction that guidelines from the American Pain Society and American College of Physicians recommend that physicians should consider acupuncture as an alternative therapy for patients with chronic low back pain not being helped through conventional methods.

Acupuncture alleviates low back pain by relaxing tight muscles, improving blood circulation and regulating the nervous system. Scientific research has found that it releases natural pain-relieving chemicals from the brain known as endorphins. Acupuncture has also been found to ameliorate pain through its effect on the part of the brain that governs serotonin, which is a brain chemical associated with mood.

The basic tenet of Chinese medicine is that acupuncture releases energetic blockages and opens flow of qi (vital energy) and blood throughout meridian pathways. These pathways form an intricate web of interconnecting energetic conduits that distribute and adjust energetic flow throughout the body. They can be thought of as an aqueduct system that enhances flow when deficient and resolves blockage when in a stagnant state.

Blocked, stagnant or deficient flow of qi and blood within the meridian system leads to energetic dysfunction and physical symptoms arising from factors such as excessive stress, imbalanced emotions, unhealthy lifestyle habits and injury or trauma. This may include overuse of one's body as a result of working out

or lifting weights too much. Other causes include prolonged sitting and lying down or sleeping in an uncomfortable position or on a bed lacking proper support. Chinese medicine treatment focuses on addressing "the root," which would typically involve building Kidney qi due to its governing the low back. Another goal would be to treat "the branch" which means targeting the salient symptoms – for which an acupuncturist would use a combination of local and distal acupuncture points to open flow to the affected region of the body. Additional needles might also be strategically placed to induce overall relaxation and strengthen qi flow as a way to enhance one's healing response.

The number of acupuncture treatments needed depends on one's physical condition, age, emotional state and energetic constitution. Younger people typically heal faster, a more chronic condition or severe injury takes longer and one that is acute can often be dealt with in a matter of two to three sessions.



Further aid is gained through recommendation of Chinese herbs, nutritional foods and the practice of Tai Chi and/or Qigong. Therapeutic massage is traditionally received in conjunction with acupuncture to release tension and tightness within the soft tissues and for opening blood circulation. More-

over, seeking help from a physical therapist provides much needed support through exercise and range of motion protocols. Regardless of method employed, it is imperative to seek guidance and diagnosis from an allopathic physician, especially to rule out underlying disease.

The important thing for a person to remember is that their body possesses an innate healing capability. It is also essential for them to keep an open mind that their pain can be alleviated. It may just be a matter of receiving some extra help to prod their body to heal itself. An acupuncturist fulfills this need through the insertion of hair-thin needles into the skin to open flow by releasing energetic blockages while reducing inflammation, building overall energy and easing emotional stress. The best way to find out if acupuncture will ignite your healing power is to simply give it a try!

Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S. is an acupuncturist, Chinese herbalist and director of Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center in Shrewsbury, NJ for over thirty years. She is author of *Qigong for Staying Young: A Simple 20-Minute Workout to Cultivate Your Vital Energy* (visit www.qigong4.us) and co-author of *Feeling Light: The Holistic Solution to Permanent Weight Loss and Wellness*. Shoshanna has taught tai chi and qigong for over 45 years and is a 6th generation lineage holder of the Guang Ping Yang Style Tai Chi Form. She is offering qigong and tai chi instruction via Zoom and outdoors weather permitting. For more information call 732.758.1800 or send an email to info@healing4u.com.



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