

Art and science

Early acupuncturists developed a complete system of diagnosis simply through methodical and detailed observation of the human body.

Without the aid of modern equipment, the first acupuncturists discovered, recorded and resolved many now familiar findings of biomedical science, such as the impact of emotional stress on the body.

Acupuncture regulates the flow of 'qi' along pathways in the body known as 'meridians'. Treatment involves the insertion of very fine needles into specific points along the meridians.

Modern medical scientists have discovered myofascial pathways that trace the meridians documented by the early acupuncturists, and the concept of qi seems to overlap with emerging facts about how the body's cells communicate.

Training as a traditional acupuncturist combines the art of diagnosis with the skill of practice. Developing both is the work of a lifetime and is what puts British Acupuncture Council members at the head of our profession.

Your local BAcC registered acupuncturist will be happy to tell you more about how acupuncture can help you.

About the British Acupuncture Council

With close to 3,000 members the British Acupuncture Council (BAcC) is the UK's largest regulatory body for practitioners of traditional acupuncture.

As a founder member of the Professional Standards Authority accredited register scheme, the BAcC guarantees high standards of training, safe practice and professional conduct.

Look for the letters MBAcC after the name of your acupuncturist to be sure of:

- ✓ extensive training – minimum three years degree level – with relevant western medicine including anatomy and physiology
- ✓ adherence to the BAcC codes of safe practice and professional conduct
- ✓ compliance with current health and safety legislation
- ✓ full cover for medical malpractice and public/products liability
- ✓ mandatory continuing professional development to keep knowledge and skills up to date
- ✓ postgraduate study of special interest areas such as pain management and acupuncture for children

To find your local BAcC registered acupuncturist search on our website or ask us for a free list by phone or email.

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British Acupuncture Council

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Practitioner details:

This leaflet is also available in large print on request



British
Acupuncture
Council



Acupuncture for you

All you need to know to make
the right choice

Accredited by



professional
standards
authority
accredited register



Why acupuncture?

Members of the British Acupuncture Council (BAcC) practise acupuncture based on Chinese medicine principles that have been researched and refined for over 2,000 years.

Acupuncture is widely used all over the world, as a stand-alone treatment or in combination with other forms of medicine, and in the far east it is fully part of mainstream healthcare.

People of all ages can benefit from having acupuncture, including pregnant women and children, and acupuncture can be used effectively alongside conventional medicine.

Acupuncture with a trained and fully qualified practitioner is one of the safest forms of healthcare you can choose.

Who has acupuncture?

Many people have acupuncture to relieve specific aches and pains, such as osteoarthritis of the knee, headaches and low back pain, or for common health problems like an overactive bladder.

Other people choose acupuncture when their body systems are out of balance, even though they have no obvious diagnosis. Some choose to have regular treatment just because they find it beneficial and relaxing. Pregnant women commonly use acupuncture for support throughout their pregnancy.

How can acupuncture help me?

Acupuncture is considered to be beneficial for a wide range of conditions.

Whatever your particular problem, because treatment is designed to affect your whole body and not just your symptoms, you may notice other niggling complaints also get better with a course of treatment.

Your local BAcC acupuncturist will be happy to offer a free chat about how acupuncture can help you.

What will happen when I go for acupuncture?

A BAcC acupuncturist will take your medical history, read your pulses, may examine the site of your symptoms, and may look at your tongue. Your individual treatment plan will be based on your state of health and lifestyle.

Your acupuncturist will decide which combination of points is right for your whole body as well as your symptoms. Sometimes acupuncture needles are inserted for just a second or two, or you may be left to rest for a while before the needles are removed.

The single-use sterile needles come in sealed packs that should be opened in front of you and are safely disposed of after each treatment.

What do acupuncture needles feel like?

Acupuncture needles are so fine that most people don't feel them being inserted. It is normal to feel a mild tingle or dull ache as your acupuncturist adjusts the needle. Many people feel deeply relaxed during the treatment.

How many treatments will I need?

Weekly sessions are quite usual to begin with, for perhaps five or six treatments, reducing in frequency as your body responds. Your BAcC acupuncturist will suggest how often you should come for treatment.

Does acupuncture work?

Evidence of acupuncture's effectiveness is growing and researchers are finding new ways of measuring the body's responses. To date the main focus of research has been on pain management. You can find out more about the latest acupuncture research at acupuncture.org.uk

Is acupuncture safe?

Definitive surveys in the UK and Germany concluded that when practised by properly trained qualified traditional acupuncturists such as BAcC members, the risk of serious adverse events from acupuncture is extremely low.

Are there any side effects?

Sometimes a small bruise may appear when a needle is removed. Occasionally, people can feel dizzy or tired for a brief time after treatment.

Should I tell my doctor I'm having acupuncture?

If you have been prescribed medication we recommend you tell your doctor that you plan to have acupuncture. Do not stop taking your medication. You should tell your acupuncturist about any medication and supplements you are taking.

BAcC acupuncturists are trained to recognise potentially serious underlying health conditions and will refer you to your GP if appropriate.

How much does acupuncture cost?

Treatment charges vary around the country and between practitioners and clinics. Talk to your local BAcC practitioner or check their website for prices before booking.

Does the NHS recommend acupuncture?

Acupuncture on the NHS is recommended by NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) for migraines and headaches, and by the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) for chronic pain, including low back pain and knee pain.

Under General Medical Council guidelines, GPs may refer patients to practitioners listed on a Professional Standards Authority (PSA) accredited register. The BAcC is the accredited register for traditional acupuncture. The PSA recommends that the public only see practitioners on an accredited or statutory register, giving you the confidence you need.

Will my health insurance pay for acupuncture?

Some health policies now cover treatment with BAcC registered acupuncturists so check with your insurer.