

NEEDLING A LITTLE TREATMENT?

How about acupuncture

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Acupuncture is used for the therapeutic treatment of pain, inflammation and musculoskeletal dysfunction by encouraging healing and restoring function of the human body. The purpose of acupuncture is simply to tap into the body's ability to heal itself. Acupuncture is one of the oldest forms of treatment known. It dates back for more than 3000 years to ancient times in China. Many people have had success with acupuncture when all other traditional forms of treatment have failed. It requires the insertion of very fine needles through the skin and tissues at specific points in the body. Acupuncture points lie on "meridians" which are invisible channels in the body through which flows the force of life – chi (energy). There are three forms of acupuncture being used today; Traditional Chinese acupuncture, Anatomical acupuncture and Intramuscular Stimulation.

Traditional acupuncture is a medical tradition originating in ancient China based on Taoism. The theory is based on Yin and Yang. The two ruling life forces that are responsible for harmony both in the universe and in the body. They are not static conditions but always changing and balancing to maintain harmony. Classical acupuncture is comprised of 361 acupuncture points arranged along 14 meridian points which is related to an organ where it gets its name. These pathways allow the circulation of energetic force called "chi". If this energy becomes blocked, it causes an imbalance in the system, resulting in illness. Insertion of needles into specific points stimulates the body's own defence mechanisms. The Large Intestine meridian starts at the thumb, travels across the elbow to the shoulder, then extends internally to the large intestine. An imbalance of energy in the Large Intestine could result in diarrhea or constipation or tennis elbow or frozen shoulder.

Anatomical acupuncture is the more modern approach taken today by therapists. When combined with a sound knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology, modern therapists can use acupuncture with greater understanding and effectiveness. Acupuncture is effective because it stimulates the body to produce endorphins (pain relieving chemicals) that block the transmission of pain signals from the body to the brain. This results in relief of pain, relaxation and restoration of the body's internal regulatory systems.

Intramuscular stimulation is a form of acupuncture that is extremely effective in releasing shortened muscles and tight bands within muscles. The needling restores the length and function of the muscle. It is very effective in reducing muscle tightness, pain associated with trigger points and increased muscle tone caused by nerve irritation.

Physiotherapists use acupuncture for many conditions including: neck and low back pain, sciatic nerve pain, frozen shoulder, tendonitis, tennis and golfer's elbow, carpal tunnel syndrome, knee and ankle pain, headaches, facial pain and a myriad of other conditions.

At Fifth Avenue Physiotherapy we provide all three acupuncture techniques; Traditional acupuncture, Anatomical acupuncture and Intramuscular Stimulation to treat a variety of conditions. The number of acupuncture treatments required will vary among individual conditions and responses to treatment. Acupuncture can be the only form of treatment, in conjunction with physiotherapy to restore optimal mobility. In fact, physiotherapy and acupuncture complement each other very well, often giving excellent results. One of the most striking aspects of acupuncture is the almost complete absence of adverse effects and complications from its use.