

What is the scientific basis for acupuncture?

Scientific research is attempting to understand the mechanism of acupuncture. At this point researchers are able to measure activity in specific various body systems when an acupuncture needle is inserted: 1) increase in peripheral blood flow, 2) increase in the neural pain threshold; 3) release of neurochemicals similar to endorphins; 4) increase in T cells and other immune constituents; 5) increased activity at nerve “gates”. Thermal PET scans also show activity in the regions of the brain responsible for “pain” messages. However, the logic of the meridian network continues to elude scientific observation.

What is the traditional theory behind acupuncture?

The meridian network is like a road map superimposed over the body with highways, secondary roads, on and off ramps, etc running throughout the body. One could also think of it in terms of an energetic irrigation system carrying “Qi” (pronounced “chee”, meaning “vital energy”) to nourish all areas of the body. The smooth flow of Qi is essential for good health and for healing. When the flow of Qi becomes obstructed, like a kink in the garden hose, symptoms can occur. Restoring the flow of Qi through the meridians using acupuncture helps bring the body back into balance and facilitates the natural healing process.

What is acute care?

Most patients seek treatment because they are in enough discomfort to do something about it. We cluster visits close together during this acute phase of treatment to reduce the level of symptoms as quickly as possible. This is typically accomplished in 2-6 weeks of treatment 2-3 times a week.

What is corrective care?

Once we have brought the level of discomfort down we begin to lengthen the interval of time between visits. Continuing care through this phase allows the healing process to occur and helps the body to consolidate the positive effects of the acupuncture so that backsliding does not occur. During this phase it is common to want to “test it out” or overdo it because of the relative absence of discomfort, however, it is important to remember that although the pain is lessened, the healing process is still unfolding and the body is vulnerable to re-injury or re-aggravation of symptoms.

What is maintenance care?

Patients with chronic conditions or symptoms that tend to recur may also require an ongoing maintenance interval. Many patients find it helpful to come in for a “tune-up” treatment every so often. This can vary from bi-weekly to monthly visits.

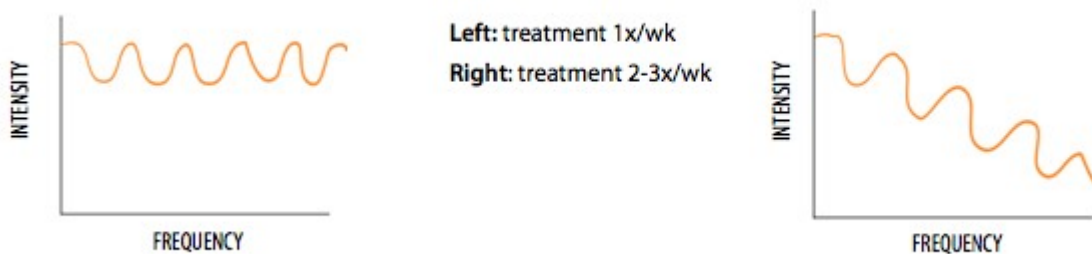
How can I get the most out of my treatments?

The positive effects of acupuncture begin right away at your first visit, but tend to be somewhat temporary at first and any initial improvements usually slide back within hours or days. As we progress through a course of acupuncture therapy the amount of symptom relief and the time period of increased wellness following each treatment will become more pronounced, until your body holds the changes on its own. It is important to be consistent with frequent visits at the beginning of care in order to build momentum and hold the gains we make from visit to visit.

How long will it take to feel better?

I ask my patients to make a commitment to their acupuncture treatment and to have realistic expectations of this system of medicine. While some patients obtain quick relief from only a few visits, most patients require 2-6 weeks of 2-3 visits per week to make significant changes, followed by weekly visits for another 4-8 weeks to consolidate gains made and prevent relapse. While acute conditions may resolve within just a few visits, chronic conditions that have persisted for many years may take many treatments over a long period of time to completely resolve.

The table below illustrates relations of treatment frequency and intensity of pain or symptoms.



How should I schedule my appointments?

If there is a time of day that works best for your appointments I encourage you to schedule several visits in advance to hold your ideal appointment times. If you need to cancel appointments please give advance notice so that I may give that time to other patients. I ask that you reschedule promptly so that a long absence does not interrupt the rhythm of your care.

Do you have any recommendations for before and after my visits?

I suggest having a meal within a couple of hours before your visits, or at least a snack on the way to the clinic. Additionally, I suggest refraining from intense physical activity, sex, alcohol or caffeine for 4 hours after each visit. You may prefer to bring shorts or wear loose pants that come above your knees comfortably, as this style of acupuncture tends to utilize points on the hands/forearms/elbows and feet/lower legs/knees.

What about the herbs or supplements you may be recommending?

Chinese herbs combine synergistically with acupuncture and have been safely used for over 2500 years to accelerate the healing process. The companies I use offer the highest quality ingredients and products are subject to stringent testing and are FDA and GMP compliant. Like acupuncture, herbs work best when taken consistently at the recommended dose. Any recommended dietary supplements are based on modern research and I use only the highest quality brands.