

# Arthritis Relief With Acupuncture



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When we think about the pain we feel with arthritis, we can ask, "what is really going on here?" What is aggravating my joints to make me experience this pain? This could be from overuse of a muscle over time, it could be from a recent injury, and it could just be stuck energy in the meridian(s) that lead to that joint in your body. For years acupuncture has been known to help alleviate the pain of arthritis, however recently more attention has been focused on its effectiveness.

There has been a lot of concern on the part of patients and physicians about the use of Vioxx, Celebrex, and Betrex, all in the family of Cox 2 inhibitors. Reports have shown that these types of drugs can carry a great-

er risk of heart attack. Just as the public and drug administration officials have become concerned with the side effects of arthritis medication, a new scientific study on the effectiveness of acupuncture has emerged.

A recent study by Brian Berman and colleagues at the University of Maryland showed groundbreaking results in the effectiveness of arthritis. The director of National Institute of Health (NIH) Center for Complementary Medicine called the investigation the largest, longest, most rigorous study on acupuncture ever conducted. The study included 570 patients with osteoarthritis of the knee joint. They were treated for 26 weeks. The group receiving true acupuncture showed a significant increase in function after 8 weeks, and after 14 weeks showed a significant decrease in pain, as compared to another group receiving only lifestyle counseling and another group receiving sham acupuncture. The true acupuncture group reported a 40 percent decrease in their pain compared to when they started the treatment. While this major comprehensive study was specific to knee joint pain, acupuncture has proven to be successful for osteoar-

thritis and rheumatoid arthritis overall.

A possible treatment plan would include a detailed history, both medical and social, that led up to the problem. Then after a series of 6 to 10 treatments, we would assess the effectiveness of the treatment and determine a plan of action for correction and/or maintenance. The specific plan would depend on how the patient has responded to the treatment. Other treatments to add are nutritional formulas and glucosamine chondroitin, specifically for bone health. Other herbs can also be included for optimal joint and bone health.

Acupuncture is a system of healthcare designed to treat the overall health of the individual. In a holistic approach to arthritis, many other factors that may be aggravating the arthritis are addressed. It is not simply masking the pain but going after the root of the problem along with symptom relief.

Everyone experiences arthritis differently. It is our job as acupuncturists to look at you as an individual to determine not only the treatment of the symptoms but also the specific way arthritis shows up for you. This way we can get to a deeper level of healing for our patients.