

Acupuncture 101: Origins & A Brief History

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Acupuncture has been widely practiced in China for over 3,500 years and according to archeological finds, stone acupuncture needles were used as early as 3000 BC. Only fine, sterile, disposable needles are used today in the US. Thus, there is no need to have apprehension about trying this health care modality.

Acupuncture is an ancient art of utilizing very thin needles in specific locations on the body called acu-points to address symptomatic concerns and the underlying constitutional reason for the symptom. Acupuncture is essentially a method to rebalance disharmonies within the body utilizing the acu-points along energy lines called meridians. These lines do not correspond to any “western” anatomical structure. However, there are 365 major acu-points located along 12 regular, and 6 extra, energy lines.

Think of meridians as rivers of energy. Whenever one of these rivers is stagnant or becomes blocked, a corresponding organ can be affected. Transversely, a disharmony in an organ can manifest in a meridian. Thus, acupuncture is one of the therapeutic modalities that can be utilized to move blocked or stagnant “Qi” (energy) thereby reactivating the body’s inherent ability to heal itself.

Acupuncture developed primarily in the north of China, above the Yellow River. The system of acupuncture gradually developed over time through observation. When a person became ill, they noticed pressure at certain locations elicited relief. Over time these locations, symptoms, and benefits were recorded and became essential in developing the system of Northern Chinese Medicine. The continued development and refining of this system, later, integrated massage and moxa as part of treatment therapies. Not until the Han Dynasty did acupuncture and Chinese herbalism unify.

Chinese medicine began to spread via 17th century missionaries and doctors that brought it to Europe. Acupuncture did not obtain American intrigue until 1972. James Reston, a journalist for the New York Times, had an emergency appendectomy while in China. Reston elected to have acupuncture instead of narcotics to control his postoperative pain. He gave acupuncture raves and a boost

in America when he described how it had eased his postoperative pain. Reston wrote, "I've seen the past and it works."

In addition, when China became open to the West, there were medical doctors and chiropractic doctors who went to China to study the technique and add it as an adjunct to their conventional treatments. Now acupuncture is experienced by millions of U.S. residence yearly. The number will only grow as people continue to search for alternatives to medications and complements to their care.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) emphasis is on balance, moderation, and harmony. These components are also essential to health. When any of the previous is not preserved and illness results, acupuncture, which is a component of TCM, can be a very effective treatment on the road to "*balance the Qi.*"

"My problem was lower back pain. Having back spasms, my pain was very severe. Treatments with Renee have been very relaxing and most worthwhile. She was my first acupuncture experience. Although at first I was a little hesitant, after the first treatment I became an instant believer! Not only is the treatment superb, but the atmosphere is very peaceful and soothing.

~EP Female 26 Buckeye, Az

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