

PRACTICAL EXERCISES • NUTRITION • MINDFULNESS • LIFESTYLE & WELLNESS

YOGATM MAGAZINE

www.yogamagazine.com

ISSUE 253/ MAY 2024

PEACE, LOVE & LIGHT

SIGNIFICANCE OF
padmasana

STRESS
RELIEF POSES
for Carers

YOGA *in*
SCRIPTURES

AMMA'S
TEACHINGS

The
niyamas

Yoga for the
VISUALLY IMPAIRED



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PORTUGAL €11.00 JAPAN ¥1572.00 UAE AED58

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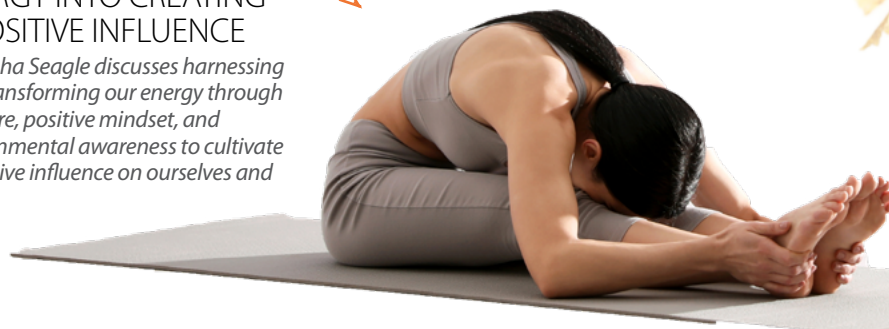
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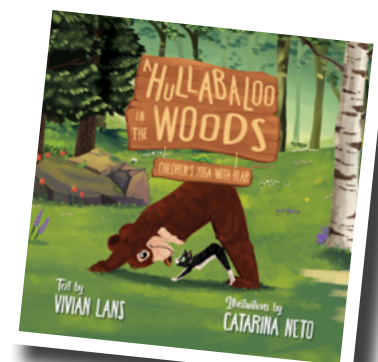
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EXPLORING THE MULTIFACETED BENEFITS **OF** *ACUPUNCTURE*

Words: Sukh Padda, holistic therapy specialist and founder of Bodisync



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My own journey and discovery of Acupuncture began over 20 years ago. Suffering from a crippling back injury and subsequent pain I tried numerous therapies including Physiotherapy, Osteopathy and Chiropractic interventions but none of these helped be on a long-term basis.

I had heard of Acupuncture before but did not know much. I knew it involved the insertion of needles which I wasn't very keen on. A friend suggested I try it as I had tried virtually everything else. So, in 2001 I began my journey into Acupuncture.

During my first acupuncture appointment, I was pleasantly surprised to find that it was not simply a matter of inserting needles based on my symptoms. Instead, the approach was rooted in what my body revealed as areas of distress. The

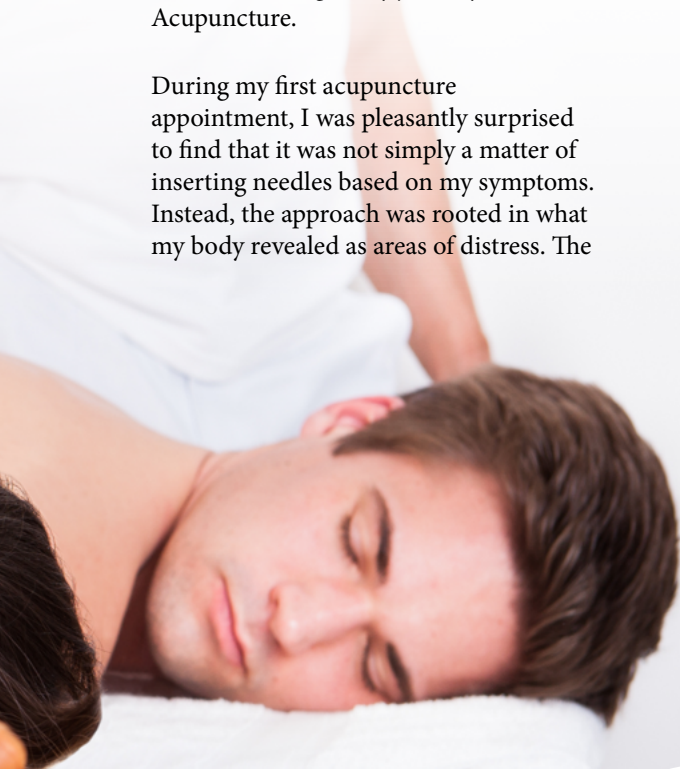


diagnosis included postural analysis, as well as tongue and pulse examinations, upon which the insertion of the needles was determined.

I was apprehensive about the prospect of having needles, given my mild needle phobia. To my surprise, they did not hurt much. While I did feel a slight sting with some more than others, it lasted only a couple of seconds.

After the initial session, I experienced a significant reduction in my pain levels. Following a few more sessions, I began to truly feel the difference, with my pain subsiding and an improvement in my mobility. I found myself able to stand and walk for longer periods.

What surprised me the most was that acupuncture not only had a positive impact on my physical well-being but also on my digestion. I noticed an improvement in my constipation and a positive shift in my mental state, which had been affected by the depression resulting from my injury. This highlighted the holistic power of true acupuncture, addressing not just symptoms but the person as a whole.



I have been in private practice for 20 years now and I'm continually amazed at the treatment results I get from acupuncture and combining it with bodywork. My own learning journey over the past 20 years has led me to explore many different forms of acupuncture including:

- **Ear Acupuncture**
- **Scalp Acupuncture**
- **Hand Acupuncture**
- **Abdominal Acupuncture**

As you can see there are different forms of acupuncture, and this has allowed me to be able to treat a wide range of ailments including digestive disorders, physical issues and emotional imbalances across a wide age group.

Techniques such as acupressure based upon massage of acupuncture points ensure that I'm able to treat children as well as provide these techniques for self help for my clients.

Acupuncture from my own experience both as a recipient and practitioner is an amazing natural health modality for all.

History and Theory

The exact origins of acupuncture are not well-documented, but its roots can be traced back to ancient China. The earliest known Chinese medical texts, such as the "Huangdi Neijing" (Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon), date from around the 2nd century BCE and mention the use of acupuncture. The concept of meridians, energy pathways in the body through which *Qi* (vital energy) flows, began to take shape during this period. Acupuncture points were identified along these meridians, forming the basis for acupuncture practice.

The theory of acupuncture is deeply rooted in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), which has a holistic approach to understanding the body and health. According to TCM theory, the human body is believed to be an interconnected system where the vital energy, called "*qi*" (pronounced "chee"), flows through specific pathways or meridians. The balance and harmonious flow of *qi* are considered essential for maintaining good health, and disruptions or imbalances in *qi* are believed to lead to illness. When this flow of *qi* is impaired, illness occurs. The flow of

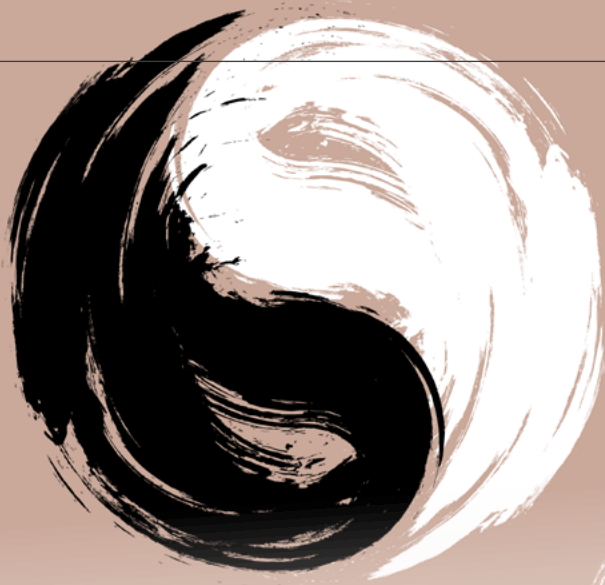
qi can be disrupted in many ways: emotional upset, physical trauma, poor diet, and overwork are all common examples. By inserting fine needles at various points along these meridian channels, the body's energy flow is opened, restoring balance, and resolving illness.

Acupuncture gained popularity in Western countries during the latter half of the 20th century. It became widely recognised as an alternative and complementary therapy, leading to increased research and acceptance.

Scientific studies have explored the physiological mechanisms underlying acupuncture, and it is now acknowledged for its potential benefits in pain management, nausea reduction, and other health conditions. Acupuncture has become a regulated and licensed profession in many countries. Practitioners often undergo formal training, and acupuncture is offered in various healthcare settings.

Today, acupuncture is practiced worldwide, and its historical roots continue to influence both traditional and contemporary approaches to healthcare. It has become an important component of integrative medicine, often used in conjunction with conventional medical treatments.





YIN YANG

Key components of the theory of acupuncture include:

Qi (Vital Energy)

Qi is the fundamental life force that flows through the body. It is divided into two opposing forces, yin and yang, which must be in balance for optimal health. The meridians, or pathways, through which qi flows are associated with specific organs and bodily functions.

Meridians and Acupuncture Points

Meridians: These are energy pathways in the body through which qi flows. Each meridian is associated with a specific organ or system.

Acupuncture Points: Along the meridians are specific points where the flow of qi can be influenced. Acupuncture involves the insertion of thin needles into these points to balance the flow of energy.

Yin and Yang

Yin represents qualities such as darkness, cold, and stillness.

Yang represents qualities such as light, heat, and activity.

Health is considered to be a dynamic balance between these opposing forces. Imbalances can result in illness, and acupuncture is thought to restore harmony by regulating the flow of qi.

Five Elements

TCM also incorporates the concept of five elements (wood, fire, earth, metal, and water), each associated with specific organs and meridians. The balance of these elements is believed to play a role in health and disease.

Organ Systems

Each organ system in TCM is associated with specific functions beyond its physiological role. For example, the heart is linked to emotions, the liver to the smooth flow of qi, and the lungs to respiration and grief.

How Acupuncture Works

Acupuncture is a powerful, natural way to treat many conditions. This therapy addresses the root cause of the issue and works to bring balance to the entire body, whether that be physically, mentally, or emotionally.

Before administering acupuncture, acupuncturists conduct a thorough assessment, which may include examining the patient's pulse, tongue, and overall health history. This diagnostic process helps identify patterns of imbalance and informs the treatment plan.

It works by penetrating the skin along the strategic meridian points with thin, solid, sterile, and disposable metallic

needles which are then activated through gentle and specific movements of the practitioner's hands or with electrical stimulation.

The insertion of needles is typically painless, and patients may feel sensations such as tingling, warmth, or a sense of heaviness. The depth and angle of needle insertion depend on the specific acupuncture point and the condition being treated.

In addition to traditional acupuncture, modern variations include electroacupuncture, where a mild electrical current is applied to the needles. Other techniques may involve the use of heat (moxibustion), cupping therapy, or the application of pressure (acupressure).

Aside from the traditional Chinese Medicine belief that acupuncture works by restoring the body's natural energy flow other theories suggest that acupuncture works as follows:

Neurotransmitter Release

Endorphin Release: Inserting acupuncture needles may stimulate the release of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers. This can help alleviate pain and induce a sense of well-being.

Nervous System Modulation

Gate Control Theory: Acupuncture may activate nerve fibres that inhibit pain signals through a mechanism similar to the gate control theory of pain modulation.

Autonomic Nervous System:

Acupuncture may also influence the autonomic nervous system, helping to regulate functions like heart rate, digestion, and immune response.

Connective Tissue Stimulation

Facial Network: Acupuncture needles may stimulate connective tissue, influencing the fascial network. This, in turn, could affect sensory perception and communication within the body.

Anti-Inflammatory Effects

Cytokines: Acupuncture may modulate the production and release of cytokines, which play a role in the body's inflammatory response.

Benefits of Acupuncture

Some potential benefits of acupuncture, based on both traditional and modern perspectives include:

Pain Management

Acupuncture is often used to alleviate various types of pain, including chronic pain conditions such as back pain, osteoarthritis, and migraines. The insertion of needles is believed to stimulate the release of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers.

Stress Reduction and Relaxation

Acupuncture may promote relaxation and reduce stress. It is thought to influence the nervous system, leading to a calming effect and a reduction in the body's stress response.

Improved Sleep

Some individuals report improved sleep quality after acupuncture sessions. This benefit may be linked to the relaxation and stress reduction effects of acupuncture.

Reduced Inflammation

Acupuncture has been studied for its potential anti-inflammatory effects. It may help modulate the immune response and reduce inflammation, which is relevant to conditions involving chronic inflammation.

Enhanced Mood and Mental Health

Acupuncture may have positive effects on mood and mental well-being. It is

quote

sometimes used as a complementary therapy for conditions such as anxiety and depression.

Headache Relief

Acupuncture has been shown to be effective in reducing the frequency and severity of headaches, including tension headaches and migraines.

Improved Digestive Function

Acupuncture may help regulate digestive function and alleviate symptoms of conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and indigestion.

Support for Women's Health

Acupuncture is often used to address women's health concerns, including menstrual irregularities, fertility issues, and symptoms of menopause.

Immune System Support

Acupuncture may influence immune function, potentially enhancing the body's ability to fight off infections and illnesses.

Complementary Cancer Care

Acupuncture is sometimes used as a complementary therapy for cancer patients. It may help manage cancer-related symptoms such as pain, nausea, and fatigue.

Regulation of Energy Flow (Qi)

In traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture is believed to balance the flow of Qi (vital energy) through meridians in the body. Balancing Qi is thought to promote overall health and well-being.

Individual responses to acupuncture can vary. Some people experience immediate relief, while others may require multiple sessions for noticeable effects. It's often used as part of a holistic treatment plan tailored to the individual's specific health needs.



Sukh Padda, holistic therapy specialist and founder of Bodisync (Clinics in Harley Street, Marylebone, Berkshire & Hertfordshire) - balancing

individuals emotionally, internally and physically. Helping them heal physical issues and release any associated underlying emotional or internal negative connections. He has 20+ years' experience with acupuncture and other treatments. Sukh is a member of the Complementary & Natural Healthcare Council, The Acupuncture Society, The British Register of Complementary Practitioners, Facial Enhance Acupuncture as well as the Chestnut centre for Japanese Integrated Medicine.

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