

Acupuncture

Traditional styles of acupuncture utilise an understanding of health and illness that has developed for over 2,000 years. This theoretical knowledge guides the diagnosis and the selection of acupuncture points. Training as a traditional acupuncturist combines the art of diagnosis with the skill of practice. Developing both is the work of a lifetime.

In traditional theory, 'qi' is a term used to describe body processes and functions. Acupuncture regulates the flow of qi within the body by inserting fine needles into specific points on 'meridian' pathways on the skin. Other techniques can also be used, such as moxibustion and cupping.

Acupuncturists may make dietary recommendations or suggest specific exercises such as tai ji quan and qi gong. In traditional acupuncture there is no mind-body split. In other words, the physical, emotional and mental aspect of life are seen as interdependent. The traditional practice of acupuncture involves more than the insertion of needles.

Your local BAcC registered acupuncturist will be happy to discuss acupuncture and how it might be able to help you.



About the British Acupuncture Council

The British Acupuncture Council (BAcC) is the UK's largest regulatory body for practitioners of traditional acupuncture.

As a founder member of the Professional Standards Authority accredited register scheme, the BAcC guarantees high standards of training, safe practice and professional conduct.

Look for the letters MBAcC after the name of your acupuncturist to be sure of:

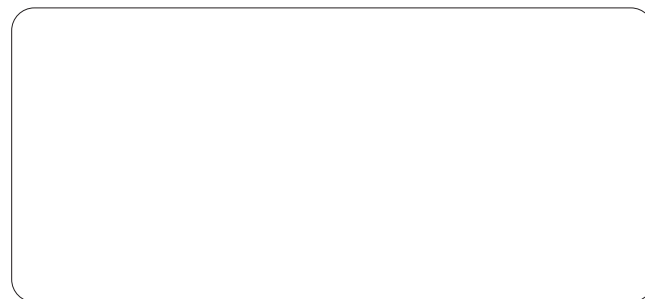
- extensive training – minimum three years degree level – with relevant western medicine including anatomy and physiology, pathology and research
- adherence to the BAcC codes of safe practice and professional conduct
- compliance with current health and safety legislation
- full cover for medical malpractice and public/products liability
- mandatory continuing professional development to keep knowledge and skills up to date
- postgraduate study of special interest areas such as pain management and acupuncture for children

To find your local BAcC registered acupuncturist, visit our website or get in touch by email or phone.

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Why acupuncture?

Members of the British Acupuncture Council (BACc) practise acupuncture based on Chinese medicine principles that have been researched and refined for over 2,000 years.

Acupuncture is widely used all over the world, as a stand-alone treatment or in combination with other forms of medicine, and in East Asian countries it is fully part of mainstream healthcare.

People of all ages can benefit from having acupuncture, including pregnant women and children, and acupuncture can be used effectively alongside conventional medicine.

Acupuncture with a trained and fully qualified practitioner is one of the safest forms of healthcare you can choose.

Who has acupuncture?

A wide variety of people use acupuncture from the very young to the very old. Some women use acupuncture for support throughout their pregnancy. Elite athletes use acupuncture. It is also used alongside western medicine in palliative care. Many people first seek acupuncture for help with painful conditions such as osteoarthritis of the knee, headaches or low back pain. Other people choose acupuncture when their body systems are out of balance, even though they have no obvious diagnosis. Some choose to have regular treatment because they find it beneficial and relaxing.

Is there evidence that acupuncture works?

Evidence of acupuncture's effectiveness is growing. A large systematic review concluded that acupuncture was effective for chronic pain: osteoarthritis, back pain, neck pain, headaches, and shoulder pain¹. This review also showed that acupuncture was not a placebo and the effects persisted over time. Acupuncture has been included in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines for Headaches (CG150) and for Chronic Primary Pain (CG193). The Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN): Management of Chronic Pain (136) guidelines include acupuncture for lower back pain and osteoarthritis.

For many conditions a sufficient number of high quality clinical trials have yet to be conducted for researchers to draw firm conclusions. You can find detailed evidence on our website: www.acupuncture.org.uk.

How can acupuncture help me?

Acupuncturists treat the person, not just the condition which they have, so each patient's treatment plan will be different. Your local BACc acupuncturist will be happy to offer a free chat about how acupuncture can help you.

What will happen when I go for acupuncture?

A BACc acupuncturist will take your medical history, read your pulses, may examine the site of your symptoms, and may look at your tongue. Your individual treatment plan will be based on your state of health and lifestyle.

Your acupuncturist will decide which combination of points is right for your whole body as well as your symptoms. Sometimes acupuncture needles are inserted for just a second or two, or you may be left to rest for a while before the needles are removed. Your acupuncturist may also use other techniques such as moxibustion or cupping.

The single-use sterile needles come in sealed packs that should be opened in your presence and are safely disposed of after each treatment.



What do acupuncture needles feel like?

Acupuncture needles are so fine that most people don't feel them being inserted. It is normal to feel a mild tingle or dull ache as your acupuncturist adjusts the needle. Many people feel deeply relaxed during the treatment.

How many treatments will I need?

Weekly sessions are quite usual to begin with, for perhaps five or six treatments, reducing in frequency as your body responds. Your BACc acupuncturist will suggest how often you should come for treatment.

Is acupuncture safe?

Definitive surveys in the UK and Germany concluded that when practised by properly trained qualified traditional acupuncturists such as BACc Members, the risk of serious adverse events from acupuncture is extremely low.

Are there any side effects?

Sometimes a small bruise may appear when a needle is removed. Occasionally, people can feel dizzy or tired for a brief time after treatment.

Should I tell my doctor I'm having acupuncture?

If you have been prescribed medication we recommend you tell your doctor that you plan to have acupuncture. Do not stop taking your medication. You should tell your acupuncturist about any medication and supplements you are taking.

BACc acupuncturists are trained to recognise potentially serious underlying health conditions and will refer you to your GP if appropriate.

How much does acupuncture cost?

Treatment charges vary around the country and between practitioners and clinics. Talk to your local BACc Member or check their website for prices before booking.

Does the NHS recommend acupuncture?

Acupuncture on the NHS is recommended by NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) for primary chronic pain, migraines and headaches, and by the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) for chronic pain, including low back pain and knee pain.

Under General Medical Council guidelines, GPs may refer patients to practitioners listed on a Professional Standards Authority (PSA) accredited register. The BACc is the accredited register for traditional acupuncture. The PSA recommends that the public only see practitioners on an accredited or statutory register, giving you the confidence you need.

Will my health insurance pay for acupuncture?

Some health policies now cover treatment with BACc registered acupuncturists so check with your insurer.

1. Vickers AJ, Vertosick EA, Lewith G, et al. Acupuncture for Chronic Pain: Update of an Individual Patient Data Meta-Analysis. J Pain 2018;19(5):455-74. doi: 10.1016/j.jpain.2017.11.005.