

How does it work?

Acupuncture is an ancient system of Traditional Chinese Medicine based on invisible channels (Meridians) that circulate vital energy and are joined by a series of acupuncture points. Dry needling is a Western form of acupuncture.

Modern science has shown that acupuncture works by stimulating the brain to produce natural endorphins which assist the body to heal itself.

It is used by your physiotherapist for various conditions including acute or chronic injuries, arthritis, back and neck pain and muscle and joint problems. Before your treatment is performed your physiotherapist will discuss, in agreement with you, what part of your body the needles will be inserted into.

How is it done?

Whilst you are in a comfortable and supported position very fine, single-use, sterile disposable needles are inserted into specific places in your body depending on your condition.

During your treatment, these may be stimulated manually, electrically or by heat. Your treatment may take up to 30 minutes during which time you will be monitored regularly.

What will I feel?

You may feel a slight pin prick as the needle goes into your skin. You may then feel an ache, tingling, warmth or mild discomfort.

Will it work for me?

Research has shown that most people gain relief of pain with acupuncture. This can be immediate or may require two or three treatments to be achieved.

Frequently people respond to acupuncture where conventional treatments have failed. However, if you have not noticed a response after two to three treatments, your physiotherapist may discuss discontinuing your treatment with you.

Is there anything my physiotherapist needs to know?

Apart from your usual medical details (including present medications), we need to know if you have:

- ever experienced a fit, faint or funny turn
- a pacemaker or any other electrical implants
- a bleeding disorder or take anticoagulants
- damaged heart valves or have any other particular risk of infection
- unstable angina, irregular heartbeats or any other heart problems
- diabetes
- low blood pressure are pregnant (acupuncture will only be offered at your physiotherapists discretion)

Please also tell your physiotherapist if you:

- are allergic to needles
- have any moles/growths or skin infections
- are feeling unwell e.g. cold/flu
- Have a phobia of needles.

You may be offered a non-invasive option.

Is acupuncture safe?

Generally it is very safe. Serious side effects are very rare - less than 1 per 10,000 treatments. Acupuncture should be undertaken by a physiotherapist who has completed a recognised acupuncture or dry needling course. They are trained to use the strictest hygiene standards and only pre-sterilised needles are used.

Does acupuncture have side effects?

You need to be aware that:

- drowsiness can occur after treatment in a small number of people and if affected, you are advised not to drive operate machinery. Take a short rest and do not drive immediately
- minor bleeding or bruising occurs after acupuncture in about 3% of treatments. If bleeding occurs, apply direct pressure to the area to stop the bleeding. In the event that the bleeding is excessive or you are unable to stop the bleeding please seek medical attention
- pain during treatment occurs in about 1% of treatments
- existing symptoms can get worse after treatment (less than 3%). You should tell your physiotherapist about this but it is usually a good sign
- fainting or nausea can occur in certain patients (particularly after first treatment). To avoid risk of fainting, it is preferable to eat prior to your appointment
- very rarely, trauma can occur to internal organs when certain points are used. This can include pneumothorax (collapsed lung). Physiotherapists are trained to use these points with minimal risk. If you experience breathing difficulties or any other concerning medical symptoms, please seek urgent medical attention.

Your physiotherapist will discuss these and any other issues with you and also ask you to sign a consent form.