

Acupuncture information leaflet

What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is used by physiotherapists to treat a variety of painful conditions, often in combination with other treatment methods or exercise.

Research has shown it can be successful in relieving pain in a variety of conditions. Acupuncture can reduce pain by stimulating the brain and spinal cord to produce natural pain-relieving chemicals such as endorphins, melatonin (which promotes sleep) and serotonin (to promote well-being). These effects can enhance the healing process as well as providing pain relief, by reducing nerve sensitivity.

Who can it help?

Acupuncture can treat a wide variety of painful conditions such as back pain, neck pain, frozen shoulder, osteoarthritis, headaches, fibromyalgia and other chronic pain conditions. Your physiotherapist will be able to let you know following their assessment of your condition whether it could help you.

What does the treatment involve?

Acupuncture needles will be inserted into specific acupuncture points that may help your condition. These may be around a painful area or located in other parts of the body. The needles will be gently stimulated using small rotational movements. You may feel a sensation, this is often described as tingling, warmth, or tightness around the site being treated. The needles may be left in for between 5 and 20 minutes. Single use, sterile needles will always be used and disposed of immediately after treatment.

Possible side effects

Acupuncture is generally a safe treatment with very rare serious side effects (less than 1 per 10000), however it can sometimes have some short term side effects.

These can include:

- *drowsiness after treatment in a small number of patients, and, if affected, you are advised not to drive.*
 - *Minor bleeding or bruising in about 3% of treatments.*
 - *Pain or aching during treatment can occur in about 1% of treatments.*
- *Symptoms can get worse after treatment (less than 3% of patients). You should tell your acupuncturist about this, but it is usually a good sign.*
- *Fainting can occur in certain patients, particularly at the first treatment.*

It is important that any side effects are reported to your physiotherapist.

There may be some particular risks with certain medical conditions and these will be discussed separately.

It is therefore important that:

- *You give an accurate account of your medical history.*
- *You inform us of any medication you are taking. Some drugs can thin the blood and acupuncture is used with caution.*
 - *You inform us if you think or know you are pregnant.*
- *You have something to eat prior to treatment, a snack is sufficient. If you are hungry you may experience light headedness or fainting.*

If you have any further questions about acupuncture or are unsure about any of the information provided, please contact Platinum Physiotherapy and speak to Helen, who will be able to answer any queries.