

How to Get the Most out of Acupuncture

Congratulations on taking this step toward health! Getting acupuncture treatment can be a wonderful investment in your quality of life and long-term wellness. People who get acupuncture often report better energy and emotional balance, a stronger immune system, and less susceptibility to stress, along with relief from specific symptoms.

In general, those who get the most benefit from acupuncture are people who cultivate balance and health in their daily lives, and are willing to make changes that reinforce the effects of acupuncture treatment. During these times, especially, all of us are concerned with using our money and time efficiently and wisely. To that end, there are definite things you can do to make your acupuncture treatment more effective and make sure you are getting the most out of each session. Here are some suggestions:

1. **Commit to a full course of treatment.** Acupuncture has a cumulative effect; in order to achieve lasting health effects, treatment needs to be consistent for a period of time. Acupuncture sessions should be frequent enough that symptoms don't backslide a lot between meetings, and treatment should last until the underlying causes have been corrected. Following these guidelines will ultimately get you the best, most lasting, and most cost-effective results. We can discuss the best schedule for you, taking into account your condition, health goals, budget, and time constraints.
2. **Pay attention to your day-to-day health** and let me know how you are doing. It can help to keep a log of symptoms if it's hard to remember. This helps us assess progress and fine-tune your treatments for maximum effectiveness.
3. **If herbs are prescribed, make a commitment to take them on a regular schedule.** If you have questions or concerns about your Chinese herbs, call me right away so we can correct any problems and keep you on track.
4. **Make room for relaxation in your life.** We live in a very active, busy, and often pressured society; it is hard to maintain any kind of balance between activity and rejuvenation without making a conscious and consistent effort to slow down sometimes. This balance between yang (activity) and yin (quiet) is a fundamental component of health in Chinese medicine. Try meditation, yoga, relaxed cooking and eating, listening to music, making art, spending time in nature, or whatever helps you calm and settle your energy.
5. **Get exercise regularly.** A major source of health problems, especially in the West, is "qi stagnation" – energy not moving freely and evenly in the body. Stress, unfortunately, tends to shut down energy flow, and the fact that many of us spend a lot of the day sitting doesn't help. Getting your body moving helps restore the normal flow of qi and aids healing.
6. **Commit to making other lifestyle changes as suggested.** Examples of things I've suggested include avoiding or eating certain foods, eating on a regular schedule, changes in sleep schedule, or trying to eliminate certain stressors. Recommendations that are tailored to your particular pattern of disharmony will help reinforce the effect of your acupuncture treatments.

I know. In the context of our daily lives, doing all of these things all the time is a tall order. You don't have to be perfect about it, but anything you can do will help your treatments move faster and help you feel better. The big plus is, these are also things that will help you stay healthy when you are done with treatment, and ultimately put you in charge of your own health.