



Go with the Flow Rebalance Qi with Acupuncture

BY **STACY AGOSTO**

Acupuncture (from Latin *acus*, “needle” and *pungere*, “prick”) or in Standard Mandarin, *zhe-n bia-n* (a related word *zhe-n jiu* (refers to acupuncture together with moxibustion) is a technique of inserting and manipulating fine filiform needles into specific points on the body for therapeutic purposes with the aim of relieving pain. *Source: Wikipedia*

When someone mentions “acupuncture,” some of us immediately focus on the “puncture” part of the word and clam up. Yet more and more people are asking it about it than ever before, according to Dr. Richard Ezgur. Ezgur is a partner at Progressive Chiropractic in Chicago. In natural health care, acupuncture is returning as a popular form of treatment.

A traditional Chinese healing art, acupuncture has been practiced for thousands of years. Here’s how it works. Fine needles are inserted into specific points of the body in order to restore and balance its natural flow of energy, or Qi (pronounced chee). Theoretically once Qi is in balance, the body is better able to heal itself.

Acupuncture has shown it can help provide relief for a number of conditions such as back and neck pain, sinus congestion and allergies. It can aid in raising energy levels, lowering stress, and even is used to quit smoking and as part of infertility treatment. Acupuncture also has shown success in relieving some of the side effects caused by HIV or medications used to treat HIV.

Referring to the procedure, Dr. Ezgur says “Most people are surprised at how anti-climactic it is. Once the needles are inserted, it’s more of a “that’s it?” reaction because people expect [it would be] much worse than it actually is.”

One reason is the size of the “needle.” Acupuncture needles are about 1/100th the thickness of the type of needle used to administer a flu shot. Many

people do not feel acupuncture needles being inserted at all, and if they do, the sensation has been described as close to a mosquito bite.

To determine if acupuncture is the right treatment for you, “A practitioner should examine your condition and health history just as any medical care professional would,” Dr. Ezgur recommends. At his office, acupuncture treatments are administered in a separate room to ensure a quiet environment. After the needles are inserted, the patient reclines and relaxes for about 15 to 20 minutes. The practitioner then removes the needles.

“The number of sessions required to feel relief will vary based on the condition and how chronic that condition may be,” says Dr. Ezgur.

Someone being treated for sinus congestion, for example, may begin to breathe easier as soon as his or her session is over. Someone who is trying to quit smoking, on the other hand, may require anywhere from 10 to 20 visits.

If you’re interested in exploring how you might benefit from acupuncture, do a little research. Find a practitioner through a referral and make certain the doctor has been trained in acupuncture. Schedule a consult and check out the office to see that it’s somewhere you’ll feel comfortable. Once your session is complete, you’ll wonder how you ever survived with unbalanced Qi in the first place.