

Musculoskeletal Outpatient
Physiotherapy

Acupuncture

Information for patients



If you and your physiotherapist have discussed having acupuncture as **part** of your physiotherapy treatment, please read this information carefully. Ask your therapist to clarify anything you do not understand or would like to discuss further.

Why have acupuncture?

Physiotherapists use acupuncture to help relieve pain. Recent research is uncertain about exactly who will benefit from acupuncture, but you may find that your symptoms are eased by it.

What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a form of therapy that involves the insertion of fine needles into specific points in the body. Most people do not feel pain when this is done, but more of a pin-prick sensation.

How does acupuncture work?

Acupuncture can help reduce pain; this may be because it can:

- prevent the messages from painful tissues travelling up to the brain, reducing how much pain is felt in the tissues
- stimulate the brain to produce natural pain-relieving substances (endorphins), which help to ease pain in the tissues
- stimulate the body to produce an anti-inflammatory chemical to reduce inflammation in the tissues.

Is acupuncture safe?

Acupuncture is generally very safe. Serious side effects are rare. Sterile, single use needles are used in all physiotherapy departments. All physiotherapists practising acupuncture have undergone recognised postgraduate training.

Are there any side effects that I need to be aware of?

Yes, you need to be aware that:

- You may feel drowsy after treatment – if you do, we advise you not to drive or handle any machinery that involves concentration.

- Minor bleeding or bruising may occur after acupuncture.
- You may experience some increase in symptoms initially following treatment.
- Existing symptoms can get worse after treatment. Tell your therapist about this, although this is usually a good sign that you will respond well to acupuncture treatment.
- As with other medical procedures, you may feel faint, feel dizzy or nauseous during your first treatment. It may be a good idea to plan to stay and rest and have a drink after your first treatment, or have someone drive you to and from the first treatment.

If there are any particular risks that apply to you, your therapist will discuss them with you.

Is there anything I should tell my physiotherapist before I have acupuncture?

Yes, your physiotherapist needs to know if:

- you have ever fainted, had a fit or funny turn
- you have a pacemaker or other electrical implant
- you have a bleeding disorder or bruise easily
- you have damaged heart valves or increased risk of infection
- you have diabetes
- you are pregnant or trying to conceive
- you have hepatitis, HIV or any other blood disorder
- you have haemophilia
- you have a needle phobia
- you have a metal or silicone allergy
- you are taking blood thinning medications.

If your health status or medications have changed, please tell your therapist before you have treatment.

The answers to the questions above may effect whether acupuncture is an appropriate treatment choice for you. Your therapist will discuss this with you at the time of your appointment.

What happens now?

When you are happy that you understand exactly what acupuncture is, you will be asked to sign a consent form and treatment will begin.

If at any time you change your mind, and would prefer not to have acupuncture, that is fine. You can refuse treatment at any time. Please tell your therapist and we will look at what alternative treatments are available.

How to contact us

Please contact us if you have any questions either before or after this treatment.

Physiotherapy Department,
Horton Hospital
Tel: 01295 229 432

Trauma Physiotherapy Outpatients,
John Radcliffe Hospital
Tel: 01865 221 540

Physiotherapy Department,
East Oxford Health Centre
Tel: 01865 264 970

Physiotherapy Department,
Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre
Tel: 01865 738 074

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALS@ouh.nhs.uk**

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