

# Acupuncture to the rescue

Dr. Stephanie Zarins DC

**If you have a pain that just won't go away acupuncture can be very effective as the sole treatment or in conjunction with other therapeutic methods.**

Acupuncture is an ancient Chinese treatment that dates back to the Stone Age. It rose to prominence as an alternative medicine when Richard Nixon went to China and was shown a patient undergoing major surgery while fully awake, anesthetized by needles placed strategically over his body. American media ran with the story and soon after it was widely accepted throughout North America.

It is not just an alternative anesthetic. The National Institute of Health and The World Health Organization recognizes and endorses acupuncture to be effective in the treatment of neurological and muscular disorders, digestive disorders, menstrual and reproductive problems, urinary tract disorders, respiratory problems, stress and psycho-emotional problems and addiction.

As a therapeutic method, it produces many of its positive effects by stimulating nerve receptors in the skin and muscles and the body releases endorphins, enkephalins and serotonin. These substances cause an increase of local blood flow that encourages tissue healing, followed by an anti-inflammatory effect and pain relief. These chemicals will either change the experience of pain, or they will trigger the release of other chemicals and hormones, influencing the body's internal regulating system. The improved energy and biochemical balance produced by acupuncture results in stimulating the body's natural healing abilities, reducing pain locally, calming the nervous system, decreases tense muscles and thereby promoting physical and emotional wellness.

Research shows that patients committed to a healthy lifestyle and receiving ongoing acupuncture treatment for maintenance and health promotion often experience decreased sick-days and faster recovery times, improvement of vitality and stamina, being able to take care of their own health which all results in a reduction in their long term health care costs.

The benefits of acupuncture are best shown in these case histories. Norton is a retired investor who enjoys his active lifestyle. He takes no medications, maintains a fun social life, and keeps busy trading stocks online for a few hours each day. However Norton was experiencing acute neck pain while sitting at the computer, which prevented him from spending more than 10-15 minutes on his computer at a time.

The cause was diagnosed as Osteoarthritis (OA), the most common joint disorder, which is largely due to aging and wear and tear on a joint. There was degeneration of Norton's cervical spine, which severely limited his range of motion and he wanted to try acupuncture treatment. Acupuncture points were selected to improve blood circulation to the joints, relax muscles and ease tension. After 15 treatments, Norton reported his wife was complaining that he was spending too much time on his computer!

Then there's Greg. He is a college professor with a previous history of a herniated disc and sciatica. Sciatica is pain, weakness, numbness, or tingling in the leg caused by injury to or pressure on the sciatic nerve. This nerve starts in the lower spine and runs down the back of each leg to the sole of the foot.

He was able to maintain his back problem in check for over ten years by combining daily exercises and massage therapy. However, one day after his regular weekend gardening activities, he developed an all too familiar low back pain and additionally, a sharp, shooting pain down his leg plus some numbness. Greg immediately came into the Advanced Therapeutic Centre and the examination of his low back and leg showed marked weakness along his L5 lumbar spinal nerve distribution.

Acupuncture points were selected to stimulate the irritated nerve at the source and down its track thereby promoting nerve conduction and communication, reducing numbness and strengthening the nerve. Acupuncture improved circulation at the level of irritation and to the injured nerve, promoting "proper healing".

After two treatments, his pain eased up and normal motor function returned. After six treatments, Greg noticed marked improvement to his numbness. Today Greg is once again maintaining his low back condition successfully with daily exercises and has also chosen to add regular acupuncture treatment to help ensure proper nerve function.

These patients are examples of how effective therapy can resolve neuro-muscular problems. If you, or your loved ones suffer with either an acute or chronic condition, your relief may also be a few simple treatments away.

If you have any questions about how you can live pain free please call Dr. Stephanie Zarins at Butler Chiropractic Clinic 519-739-2701 or email [drbutlerchiropractic@bellnet.ca](mailto:drbutlerchiropractic@bellnet.ca)



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**Dr. Matt Butler D.C**

**Butler Chiropractic**

**St. Clair Beach Health Care Centre**

**500 Manning Rd. Unit #6**

**Tecumseh ON N8N 2L9**

**Tel: 519-739-2701**

**Fax: 519-739-1266**

[www.ButlerChiropractic.ca](http://www.ButlerChiropractic.ca)

[drbutlerchiropractic@bellnet.ca](mailto:drbutlerchiropractic@bellnet.ca)