

NEEDLE LITTLE HELP?

Acupuncture For Health

BY STEVE KRAFFT

WHEN YOU FIRST THINK ABOUT ACUPUNCTURE, IT SEEMS CRAZY: STICK NEEDLES INTO YOUR BODY TO CHASE AWAY PAIN AND DISCOMFORT! BUT THAT'S WHAT ACUPUNCTURE IS ALL ABOUT — AND MANY PEOPLE SAY IT WORKS.



Dr. David Perrine and patient
Roxanne Longano

This ancient medical technique has been practiced in China for an estimated 5,000 years, but the amazing thing is acupuncture has only been in our backyard for a few decades.

Remember “Ping-Pong diplomacy,” the time in the early 1970s when Americans and Chinese played table tennis and formerly frosty diplomatic relations gradually thawed? That’s when a lot of people first learned about acupuncture. Today, it is clearly here to stay.

There are a number of acupuncture specialists in Scottsdale and throughout the Valley, and Dr. David Perrine is one of them. He became interested in acupuncture while he was in chiropractic college. “I had a physiology professor who was a cardiologist

from Washington University Medical School,” he remembers. “He told us back in the 1980s he was invited through the university to go to China and observe some of their practices. He explained how he witnessed an open chest surgery without traditional anesthesia, only acupuncture. That made a tremendous impact on me.”

Odds are you won’t see acupuncture used in open chest surgeries in America, but it is used to provide relief to people suffering from a wide variety of medical conditions. Jennifer Jacoby, who practices acupuncture at the Circle of Healing Arts in Kierland Business Center, ticks off a list of complaints people have when they come to her: “Headaches, asthma, insomnia, fatigue, PMS, menopausal discomfort, infertility, libido changes, arthritis pain, sports and work-related injuries, and digestive disorders,” she says. “The acupuncture needles offer a suggestion to the body, a blueprint for restoring proper function and flow.”

How does acupuncture work? Traditional Chinese medicinal procedures are founded on the principle that life revolves around the coexistence of opposites: winter and summer, night and day, cold and hot, and on and on. Practitioners of this type of medicine believe there is a force called Qi (pronounced “chee”) that flows through the body in pathways called channels. If the circulation of Qi is disrupted, people suffer joint pain, headache, anxiety, indigestion and a variety of other maladies. Acupuncturists insert their needles in strategic locations on the body to stimulate the flow of Qi.

Needles are sterile, a few inches long, and they stay in place 20 to 40 minutes. Often patients report they don’t even feel the needles, just a general sense of relaxation and well-being after treatments. Acupuncture needles may make you feel a little tingling,

numbness, aching, warmth, heaviness or cramping perhaps, but not usually pain. Results of this time-tested technique vary, naturally, but it is not hard to find glowing reports about the benefits of acupuncture from some satisfied customers.

Ted Wagner of Tempe went to Dr. Roxie Strand of the Center for Natural Healing in Tempe because he was a classical guitarist suffering from weakness in his left hand. Eight treatments later he says he was playing better than ever. "My hand strength was greatly improved," he reports, "and I felt the most wonderful side benefit of an elevation of my senses after the treatments. My sight, my hearing, everything was so much more acute. It was quite interesting."

Sharon Swanson went to Dr. Perrine because of a chronically aching, throbbing shoulder. She is a trapshooter and was afraid she might have to quit the sport entirely. She endured three miserable years of pain before she received acupuncture treatments.

"Being a competitive trapshooter, I needed some relief," Swanson says. "Dr. Perrine suggested a series of acupuncture treatments. Now my shoulder is almost 100% better. I can sleep at night. Also, I can shoot a program of 1,000 targets a week and not hurt for weeks after."

This success story gets even better. In 2003, Sharon Swanson was named captain of the Arizona State Ladies Trapshooting team, a remarkable feat considering she came close to abandoning her passion because of her chronic shoulder trouble.

These stories are inspiring, but acupuncturists say it would be wrong to believe pain relief is the only benefit you can get from this therapy.

"Acupuncture is used in China ... for nearly every medical condition," notes Dr. Strand. "In our Western culture, it has been widely accepted for pain relief but not for other conditions mainly because people are not well-informed." Dr. Strand says acupuncture is useful for asthma, menstrual dysfunctions, and even common cold and allergy symptoms.

This ancient Chinese technique is finding another modern application: it's helping some people stop smoking. Kimberly



ACUPUNCTURE HELPED
GET MY HORMONES IN
BALANCE AND RELAXED
MY MIND AND BODY



right: Dr. Jacoby treats a patient

Dr. David C. Perrine
Chiropractic Health Center
Affiliate: International Academy of
Medical Acupuncture, Inc.
480.661.7799

Dr. Roxie Strand
Center for Natural Healing
602.955.0117

Dr. Jennifer Jacoby
The Circle of Healing Arts, LLC
480.281.1460
www.circleofhealingarts.net

Mercer wanted to kick the habit but couldn't figure out how. "Like most smokers I know, they do not want to be smokers," she says. "I had wanted to quit for years and thought I had tried it all: the patch, the gum, the drugs, cold turkey — no success!" Finally she turned to bi-weekly visits to Dr. Perrine. Soon the healing needles worked their magic. "It was truly a miracle to me! I just had my one year (smoke-free) anniversary," reports Kimberly.

Perhaps the most touching testimonials come from people like Cydney Hubbard. She wanted to have a baby and was using a fertility specialist. The specialist told her acupuncture might help her get pregnant. Cydney went to Dr. Strand for several

months. "Acupuncture helped get my hormones in balance and relaxed my mind and body," she believes. "Both of these things helped prepare my body to carry a baby. After several months we got pregnant and are now the happy parents of a beautiful baby boy."

Acupuncturists, like other medical professionals trained in naturopathic techniques, say there is a place for the hospitals and doctors all of us know so well.

Followers of traditional Chinese medicine desire a place alongside Western medicine, and their offices now dot the Valley. Bringing acupuncture to Arizona only took a few thousand years... and a few ping pong balls hit at the precisely right moment in history. **sm**