

Acupuncture For Weight Loss

Acupuncture is not a panacea or a wonder cure in the treatment of weight control. But, acupuncture is effective in making it easier to lose and maintain that loss if the patient is willing to change their lifestyle. The exact mechanism by which acupuncture works is unknown but we know that acupuncture needles inserted into specific points on the body and in the ear release endorphins which have a calming and relaxing effect that makes it easier to deal with stress, frustration and anxiety that can trigger overeating and bingeing on fattening foods. Also endorphins affect the digestive and hormonal systems so acupuncture can help rebalance the organ systems that are running too fast- or in this case too slow—i.e., the metabolism and the will power.

The Acupuncture Treatments

In order for us to choose the correct points for you, you must first come in for a consultation to discuss your particular pattern of overeating, and let us know in your intake form if there are any real digestive difficulties. Then we would check your pulse to discern the general state of your energy and measure the health of your stomach energy in particular, and then we would look at your tongue to check for cracks, peeling or puffiness on the stomach area, or a suspicious yellow or thick white coating that might indicate troublesome heat or coldness in the stomach and would provide some clues as to why the person was gaining weight.

The Acupuncture Points

Then, armed with this information, we would devise a treatment protocol using a combination of ear and body points. Although the Chinese developed the system of ear acupuncture a long time ago, as one of the various Microsystems of the body containing all the points relating to the major organs and body parts.

For example: Many of the points from both systems that are important for weight loss treatments are:

- Mouth - for the impulsive eater who may also smoke a lot and talk a lot
- Stomach - for the person who eats even after they're full or who's constantly nibbling
- Hungry - for general appetite control
- Lung - for food addicts, and people who love chocolate, sweets
- Shenmen - a calming point, for the psychology overlay for anxiety, anger, frustration, insecurity
- Endocrine - for water retention that's responsible for some of the weight gain
- Adrenal and Ovary - if weight gain is due to menopause
- Spleen - for sugar imbalances and hormonal disturbances
- Kidney - for water retention, and nervous system and hormonal imbalances
- Thyroid - for slow metabolism

We may use electro stimulation on some of these points to increase the endorphin release and stimulate the metabolism. The needles would be kept in place for around thirty to forty-five minutes depending on how much support was needed for the patient, and after the needles are removed, ear tacs with adhesive on them are often placed in the same spots on the ear to continue the stimulation between treatments. The way it works is this: when the patient feels an urge to eat, s/he applies mild pressure to the point or rubs it back and forth for about 20 seconds. This type of acupuncture stimulates

the point, causes a mild endorphin release, relaxes the patient and helps them to regain their willpower or resolve about resisting the temptation to eat. The patient removes the tacs at home after three days and throws them away or takes them out sooner if there is any irritation or discomfort. It is a good idea to also remove oneself from the location, person or food that triggers the resistance to the diet or contributes to the breakdown of willpower. For example, one might want to stay away from the kitchen and refrigerator between meals.

The Treatment Plan

The number of acupuncture treatments necessary depends on the patient's goals for losing weight, the speed at which they want to lose, and their commitment to keeping the weight off. If the overeating is severe, a treatment every day for the first five days is appropriate and can then taper off the second week to every other day and the third week to every three days. For the average patient who wants to lose between five to ten pounds, one treatment every three days or twice a week until they reach their goal is appropriate, and then a booster treatment once every two weeks is optimal. After a few booster treatments, the patient and practitioner will mutually decide when to terminate frequent treatments and then can aim to meet approximately four times a year at the change of seasons when energy levels are unstable and harmonizing of one's system is appropriate for everyone.

Nutritional Counseling And Life Style Changes

As was mentioned earlier, a good weight loss program includes nutritional counseling and exercise as well as a commitment to make permanent lifestyle changes. A diet that is high in fiber and low in fat, with moderate amounts of low-density carbohydrates and low-fat protein is usually the best choice to adopt. With this type of a diet program, the patient can avoid the pit-falls of yo-yo dieting or the tendency to lose weight and then regain it.

Other important tools that can aid in weight loss are stress reduction techniques and a moderate exercise regimen. And since the goal, of a weight program is not only weight loss but the maintenance of that loss, an exercise program that the patient likes is the best one to choose. The patient could try starting a program that includes brisk walking three times a week for forty minutes. After a few weeks when stamina is increased, they could try walking five times a week. After that more aerobic exercise can be added such as the treadmill, stair climber or aerobics classes, cycling or whatever form of rigorous exercise the person enjoys and can maintain for the long term. It is a good idea to use free weights beginning with three pound weights and practicing just two to three sets of arm curls three times a week. Moderate weight training builds lean body mass and helps to reduce body fat as well as strengthen and build bone mass and reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

Herbal Medicine And Supplements

Many diet and appetite suppression products are available on the market and surprisingly there is a very effective and safe ancient Chinese formula for digestion that comes in a pleasant tasting chewable wafer form called BAO HE WAN. These will support the diet program and balance the blood sugar to help give the body the strength, energy and defense it needs to maintain the healthy life style that s/he has begun.

About The Author

Dr. Vincent Cunhai Yu is a registered acupuncturist who has worked in China and Russia. He is practicing now in VANCOUVER. Dr. Yu is a specialist who has worked in a large hospital for 16 years.

Dr. Yu has done extensive researches on **back pain, digestion related troubles and headaches**. He is also an expert on **arthritis, soft tissue injury, frozen shoulder, tennis elbow, neck pain, insomnia, facial palsy, depression, strokes, quit smoking, and lose weight, hair loss, low immunity, eczema and acne**.

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