

Acupuncture

What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is the insertion of very fine needles into the skin at particular points on the body to treat ill health or to maintain good health. It is thought to stimulate the body's ability to heal by stimulating nerves under the skin and in muscle tissue.

It is often seen as a form of [complementary therapy](#) although it is used in many NHS general practices, as well as the majority of pain clinics and hospices in the UK.

What can it help with?

Acupuncture may alleviate a number of health problems, for example:

- joint pain
- dental pain
- postoperative pain

Currently, the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence](#) (NICE) only recommends considering acupuncture as a treatment option for:

- chronic tension-type headaches, and
- [migraines](#)

Acupuncture is sometimes used for a variety of other conditions as well, but the evidence is not conclusive for many of these uses.

If you are receiving treatment from your GP, it is best to tell them about your acupuncture plans as it may enable you to cut down on your medication. It is also important to tell the acupuncture practitioner about any medication you are taking, as this might affect your response to the treatment.

Acupuncture services

Acupuncture is sometimes available on the NHS, most often from GPs or physiotherapists, although access is limited.

Most acupuncture patients pay for private treatment. The cost of acupuncture varies widely between practitioners.

British Acupuncture Council is the UK's main regulatory body. Members of the council have completed a thorough training of at least three years in traditional acupuncture. Use the search tool on their website to find a practitioner in your area.

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Useful Organisations

Action on Pain

Email: painline@action-on-pain.co.uk

Website: www.action-on-pain.co.uk

Telephone: 0345 603 1593

Address: 2 Mill Close, PE34 4JG

British Acupuncture Council

Email: info@acupuncture.org.uk

Website: www.acupuncture.org.uk

Telephone: 020 8735 0400

Address: 63 Jeddo Road, W12 9HQ

NICE (the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

Email: nice@nice.org.uk

Website: <https://www.nice.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0300 323 0140

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Chronic pain