



INTEGRATIVEALTERNATIVEHEALTHCARE

christina FICK

Acupuncture By Christina Fick, L.Ac.

Christina Fick is a licensed Acupuncturist in downtown Evergreen. She studied health and alternative medicine in Hawaii, San Diego, and Colorado and holds two Masters Degrees in Acupuncture, Traditional Chinese Medicine and Herbology. She is currently in the Doctoral program at OCOM in Portland Oregon. Christina now offers Nutrition, Massage, Herbal Consults, Reiki and Coaching at her clinic. Visit her website for tons of information: ChristinaFick.com or call 303-594-8348.

What really is acupuncture, and why needles?

For the average person, acupuncture is a confusing thing. Most people don't have a clue what it is. And truthfully, many acupuncturists don't even fully understand what it is, either. My goal in life, and what I've been tirelessly studying for the last 10 years, is to really understand what in the world is

"I feel if the patient and myself can be on the same page of expectations, the treatments will be far more successful."

acupuncture and how in the world it works. One frustration I have is that when you look up any information about what acupuncture is, the description is often some vague, ancient explanation of an enchanting, mythical medicine that no one can really understand. If you like science, like I do, you might want to check out the book "Medical Acupuncture; A Western Scientific Approach" by J. Filshie and A. White. Having this be my new favorite book (I'm a geek, I know), I recently updated my website to follow my standards of a description of acupuncture. Don't get me wrong, the 5,000-plus years of experiments, observations and efforts the Chinese medical doctors before me have put together is not all bogus. There are a lot of things the Chinese knew before science could find the answers. I get frustrated with the inaccuracy of the translations we use in Chinese medicine, which can discredit some of its function. For example, we say a person might have 'spleen qi deficiency,' but the patient really has nothing wrong with their actual spleen. 'Spleen' is just a title we give to certain diseases.

So here is a synopsis of the research I've been reading over the last few years and the thesis and capstone project I've been working on for my doctoral program. The full text can be read on my website, ChristinaFick.com, under the 'About acupuncture; What is acupuncture and how can it help?' page.

Acupuncture is simply the act of needling into areas of the body that are highly conductive to the nervous system to change the output of the brain. We use needles because they are metal and they conduct the electricity in the body (via the nervous system). When a metal rod (the acupuncture needle) is inserted into these neural pods (acupuncture points), it changes the message being sent to the brain, or can alert the brain that a message is being sent. These neural pods are like traffic signals or alert boards on a road that send messages to the cars. These are not the imaginary lines or meridians we are often told or think about with acupuncture. These are real, physical neural pods called A and C fibers and they can be seen on electromagnetic and heat scans. 286 acupuncture points are on or very close to major blood vessels, which are surrounded by small nerve bundles, and 309 acupuncture points are exactly on nerve bundles that penetrate the fascia eliciting a change when the signal is interrupted. So, acupuncture can theoretically affect any condition that deals with nerves or the nervous system, the brain, the endocrine system (hormones) or anything relating to blood circulation and pressure.

An acupuncturist is taught in school that acupuncture manipulates Qi, or the life force energy. While there is some truth to this, this can be misleading. The biggest fault Chinese medicine has had, in my opinion, is creating this mythical, magic and often misleading and incorrect English translation. Acupuncture does in fact manipulate energy—the electrical energy of the body, or in other words, the nervous system. And yes, this is backed up by science. Because we can't see energy, the Chinese thought it was 'magic.' Just like it is not magic when a light bulb is powered, it really isn't magic to perform acupuncture. An acupuncture needle simply acts like a traffic light. We can turn on or off pain signals to the brain by choosing different points. The points that turn off pain signals are often near nerve bundles that stimulate areas of the brain that produce that 'rest and digest' parasympathetic response. When there is an injury and we want to increase blood circulation to bring white blood cells to the area to help with possible infection, the points we choose are one of the 286 points that are near major blood vessels

What Really is Acupuncture?

and points that stimulate your 'fight or flight' or sympathetic nervous response.

Let's recap: Acupuncture is actually quite simple. All we do is pick areas to insert very tiny, metal needles into the tissue to change the signal to your brain to provoke a response from either your nervous system, circulatory system or endocrine (hormones) system, or a combination of all three.

I added a section on my website that explains HOW acupuncture can help you and how you can get the best results from acupuncture. So if you're curious about that, check out my full website for more information. I always try to give my patients as much possible information and explain why I am suggesting what I am. I feel if the patient and myself can be on the same page of expectations, the treatments will be far more successful. Medicine has come a long way in the last 100 years, but there is still so much we don't know!

Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is to not stop questioning. - Albert Einstein