



Patient Help Sheet

Acupuncture for Low Back Pain

Here are some tips that you can use to help balance and support your health during this time. Please feel free to call me if you have further questions or concerns.

"He who has health has hope; and he who has hope has everything." - Arabian proverb

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Statistics show that almost eight out of ten people will experience low back pain at some point during their life. Seeking medical treatment for back pain is very common. Typically back pain is fleeting and can be easily resolved with rest, heat and an occasional anti-inflammatory like ibuprofen. However, once the damage is done, the recurrence of back pain can be as high as 50 percent. Part of this is because as we age, things like muscles and tendons become less flexible and pliable. It is also very well known that in the United States, people are too sedentary and this leads to excess weight gain that can create added pressure on the body, especially the low back.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is a medical system that dates back nearly 3,000 years. But despite its age, TCM has a lot of validity to offer in the age of modern medicine. TCM provides many ways of combating low back pain. Here are just a few examples of how this ancient medical system can help.

Acupuncture for Low Back Pain:

Studies have shown that acupuncture stimulates the body to produce natural steroids that reduce inflammation. Acupuncture also increases the production of endorphins, which are helpful in reducing pain. In this way, acupuncture can be very helpful in preventing costly surgeries or prescription pain medication addiction. If a person seeks out acupuncture treatments when the low back pain is acute, it can potentially help them avoid chronic pain, thus decreasing the need for pain medications or surgery.

Acupuncture Points for Low Back Pain:

Large Intestine 4 This point is located bilaterally on the back side of the hand, in the webbing between the forefinger and the thumb. When the hand is made into a fist, the point can be located in the center of the mound of flesh that is created. This point is used for relieving pain anywhere in the body.

Gallbladder 34 This point is found bilaterally on the outer side of the lower leg. It can be found in the depression that is in front of and below the head of the fibula. This point is known as the influential point of the tendons.

Urinary Bladder 40 This point is located bilaterally on the crease behind the knee, right in the center, directly behind the knee cap. This point helps relieve pain along the spine. It is helpful for relieving muscle spasms and reducing pain associated with sciatic nerve involvement, which stems from the low back.



Nutrition for Low Back Pain:

Proper nutrition is vital for everyone, but for those suffering from low back pain, it can be extra important to provide the body with the right nutrients. Fatty fish, like tuna and salmon, provide omega-3 fatty acids that can help reduce inflammation. Grapes and berries contain antioxidants and anti-inflammatory components that inhibit enzymes responsible for pain. Hemp seeds are another great food to consume if you are suffering from low back pain. Full of anti-inflammatory properties and healthy fats, hemp seeds can decrease pain and inflammation.



Chinese Herbs for Low Back Pain:

Herbs and combinations of herbs, known as formulas are used frequently in TCM. They can be used topically in the form of balms or salves and they can also be taken internally. One specific herb that is found frequently in low back pain formulas is Xu Duan. This herb is used because it strengthens the sinews, promoted blood circulation and alleviates pain.

Most herbal formulas have specific herbs in them that help target the areas that are affected. For instance, Du Huo Ji Sheng Tang contains herbs that target the muscles and sinews of the low back area to alleviate pain and inflammation.

As you can see, TCM is a great way to deal with low back pain. If you are experiencing this problem, contact your local acupuncturist to see what they can do for you.



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