

Acupuncture

Acupuncture used for the relief of pain has been used in China for over a thousand years but it has only been in the last 30 years or so that western medicine has really recognised the potential benefits. In the past 20 years much research has been carried out to understand how using a needle can influence pain. It has been found that acupuncture can block pain messages reaching the brain as well as releasing important pain relieving chemicals from the brain itself. It also offers the benefit of helping to release muscle tension which is a very common finding particularly for those suffering with back pain.

In fact, acupuncture has been so well researched and accepted in western medicine, that the NHS guidelines have, in the past, recommended manual therapy (manipulation/mobilisation) and acupuncture for the treatment of low back pain. Many traditional approaches to the treatment of back pain, for example, Ultra-Sound, Laser and Interferential therapy are currently not recommended. This does not mean that these approaches are not effective but the research to fully support their use is scarce.

Unless you have a needle phobia, acupuncture, used as part of a combined approach, can be very effective as a pain relieving treatment. The needles that are used today are single use, sterile needles that are very thin and, therefore, rarely hurt. Very few people cannot tolerate acupuncture with most finding it relaxing and effective.

If you are in pain, particularly chronic (longstanding) pain, acupuncture could well offer the relief that you are looking for.