

ACUPUNCTURE

Here at the Amity Chiropractic and Rehabilitation Center we see many patients and use a variety of techniques for different types of pain syndromes. However, patients are often surprised to discover that one of the treatments we offer is **acupuncture**. In fact, Dr. Cocco has been performing acupuncture at our office since 1997. Here are the answers to some of the more common questions patients have about his ancient but effective technique.

WHAT IS ACUPUNCTURE AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Acupuncture is a system which involves the stimulation of various points throughout the body to elicit a healing response. Traditional Chinese acupuncture teaches that our bodies contain numerous "meridians", or energy pathways. Each of these pathways contain numerous points. By stimulating these points, a healing response is initiated, resulting in relief of symptoms.

HOW IS ACUPUNCTURE PERFORMED?

Acupuncture is typically performed in conjunction with joint manipulation and various forms of advanced myofascial techniques (such as deep massage). It has been Dr. Cocco's experience that the most effective approach is usually needle acupuncture; however, acupressure, laser, reflexology, skin rolling and Guasha (another Asian technique) can also be used. Acupuncture points are selected by palpation (touch) of tender points or "trigger points" associated with the individual's condition. Once the appropriate points have been selected, the skin over that point is cleaned and a very thin disposable acupuncture needle is inserted into the point. Most patients are surprised at how comfortable acupuncture is. They sometimes are not even aware when a needle has been inserted! After a few minutes, the needles are simply removed by the doctor and disposed of appropriately.

WHAT KINDS OF CONDITIONS DOES ACUPUNCTURE TREAT?

Many types of neck and back pain, as well as headaches, respond very well to acupuncture, including pain from herniated discs. Patients with osteoarthritis and tendonitis of the arms, legs, feet and hands often enjoy significant relief as well. Additionally, we have seen some benefit with smoking cessation, insomnia, sinusitis, PMS and other general conditions. Be sure to speak with Dr. Cocco to find out if modern acupuncture might be right for you!

Dry Needling

Dry needling is a myofascial trigger/tender point technique whose purpose is to neutralize dysfunctional connective tissue and restore or improve muscle functionality.

The procedure is valuable both diagnostically and therapeutically, and the therapy acts to disrupt physiologically locked soft tissue. The benefits of this can be far reaching as myofascial pain and tightness play a key role in most musculoskeletal pain syndromes. Dissipating trigger points can be crucial in reducing pain generators in both the spinal and peripheral regions.

The technique is well established in the literature as an effective treatment of soft tissue dysfunction. Many authors attest to its effectiveness in case studies as well as statistically significant effects in controlled trials. It has been widespread in Europe and is gaining strength in the United States as a treatment with strong cost benefit and cost effectiveness. This procedure is not to be confused with acupuncture, which is an Oriental/Asia complete system of healing whose theories focus upon the use of specific points, meridians, and the concept of balancing body energies. The myofascial trigger point dry needling procedure is based upon traditional western concepts of anatomy, physiology, neurology, and biomechanics. The only commonality with acupuncture is the choice of the procedural tool, the monofilament needle. Dry needling is very well tolerated by patients of all ages, and is almost painless. Therapeutic benefits will typically be seen within one to six treatments if the patient's condition is suitable for this procedure. Dr. Cocco has completed training for this technique from The Dry Needling Institute founded and directed by Dr. David Fishkin, who has been developing and applying this technique since 1998. The treatment can be used as a stand-alone method of treatment, but more commonly is utilized in association with chiropractic methods to achieve a more comprehensive degree of joint and muscular improvement.

Why is Dry Needling Not Acupuncture?

Myofascial trigger point dry needling requires a physical examination, diagnosis, location of anatomical points based on western understanding of anatomy, neurology, and physiology. It does not use theories of meridians, energy, pulse points, or tongue characteristics to make a determination of why or where to place the needle. Acupuncture is a separate system of healing with its own ancient laws and philosophy. The tool is the only common element between the two techniques. It is also notable that since trigger points have depth and breadth, multiple needles may be utilized to address one trigger point location, and this protocol is not typical of acupuncture technique either.

MYOFASCIAL RELEASE

What is Myofascial Release?

Myofascial Release is a form of soft tissue therapy. Myo means of or relating to muscle, and fascia is the tissue that holds muscles together and forms the bridge between muscles creating support for our entire body. The fascia allows forces to be transferred from one muscle to another and creates movement at the joints while still allowing suppleness and mobility.

This approach is used to treat adhesions, scar tissue, inflammation, and increased density in both the muscles and the fascia. These fascial changes are often felt by the chiropractor as increased density of the muscle and are usually tender to touch. This is called a trigger point. These problems are often caused by daily postural strain and poor movement patterns or various types of injury. It can last indefinitely without treatment and will cause the body to compensate in other muscles and joints.

These trigger points and dense muscles can be treated with myofascial therapy which can include:

Graston (tool assisted), Active release technique (deep massage with movement and or stretching), deep manual fascial manipulation, and sometimes a combination of the above. Here at Amity Chiropractic we term all the above approaches as Advanced Myofascial technique (AMT).

For a visual appreciation of fascia go to YouTube and search "Fuzz Speech".

The video is called "Gil Hedley: Fascia and stretching: The Fuzz Speech". The "fuzz" shown in the video is actual fascia from a human body.

How does myofascial treatment work?

The various types of fascial manipulation act on the dense tissue to physically break up the adhesions, increase blood flow to the tissue, and restore motion of the muscle and joints of the region. It is important to treat the primary point responsible for the dysfunction and also treat the areas of postural compensations. (For additional information you can google search Luigi Stecco re Fascial Manipulation)

The technique of treatment is important because the proper location, time on each point, and depth of treatment needs to be suitable to get results. In my opinion the treatment is usually painful (patients often say it's a "Good Hurt") in order to achieve results. Also if the point is not painful then it is not likely an important point.

What areas should be treated?

The locations of treatment are determined by understanding the individuals pain, injury history, and on examination checking areas that we have learned through experience to potentially be involved.

Who would benefit from Myo Fascial Treatment?

The individuals that need this type of treatment usually have:

- Any increase in muscle tension, pain, and/or limited mobility in joints or muscles anywhere in the body ie. spine, arms, legs, shoulders, knees, jaw, and head.
- Individuals who are too fragile to undergo classic chiropractic manipulation usually benefit from this type of treatment along with stretching and mobilizing of joints.
- Virtually just about anyone would get some benefit from some type of myofascial therapy but some people need it more than others.

What are the common conditions that benefit?

Any sprain or strain

Chronic stiffness

Poor posture

Spinal pain and injury ie. Whiplash

Carpel tunnel syndrome

Plantar fasciitis

Tennis elbow

Tendonitis in all regions

Headaches

TMJ syndrome

Shoulder and hip pain and injury

All serious athletes