

Published in the Valley Harvester, September, 2019

### Natural help for neck pain

What a pain in the neck! Whether you have whiplash, arthritis, or plain old tight muscles due to stress or computer work, neck pain is no fun. Whatever the cause, I have found acupuncture to be extremely effective in treating neck problems, as well as the often associated issues of headaches, nerve pain/tingling/numbness, and shoulder and back pain.

Acupuncture involves the insertion of extremely fine, sterile needles both at the site of pain, and at distal and supporting points along the meridians (energy lines). In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), all pain is due to a blockage in the flow of Qi (bioenergy) and blood. Acupuncture unblocks this flow, loosening tight muscles, flushing out waste products, and bringing healing to the tissues. In this way, it excels in decreasing pain and stiffness, and increasing range of motion.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is a holistic system that treats the whole person, in body, mind and spirit. For this reason, new clients are given a thorough diagnosis, involving a series of questions regarding their physical and emotional functions. A pulse and tongue diagnosis completes the picture.

Acupuncture points are then selected not only to treat the painful area, but also to bring balance to the whole person. For example, does the client have insomnia? Hot flashes? Digestive problems? Headaches? Fatigue? Are there other sore areas in the body? If the neck pain is associated with arthritis, I will generally add points to address the kidney, as this energetic system rules the bones and joints. If the pain is due to stress (as it often is!), I will tend to choose supporting points on the paired meridians of the liver and gallbladder. The gallbladder meridian runs through the neck and shoulders, and the emotions associated with stagnation in this system are anger, impatience, irritation and stress. As well, I'll usually add points to bring calm and relaxation to the whole body and mind. In this way, we are treating not only the pain, but also its source – both the branch and the root.

Many of my clients have been thrilled to find that after receiving acupuncture treatment, they can turn their head without pain and restriction. What a joy to finally be rid of that pain the neck - often, for the first time in a long while! Not only that, but seemingly unrelated issues are frequently resolved. Pain in other areas of the body is often reduced, and clients find that they are sleeping better, have more energy, and are more relaxed.

What an amazing system! You can see why Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture has been used for over 2000 years! When the flow of energy is restored, the whole body and mind feels looser, lighter and more energetic. “Not only does my neck feel better, but I just feel better all over – I feel happier, more relaxed, and I actually feel like going out and doing things again!”

*Jane Marshall, D.TCM, D.Ac is a member of the NS Association of Acupuncturists (NSAA) and has been practicing Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture for 17 years. Her office is located at 112 Front St, in downtown Wolfville. For more information, check out her website: [janemarshallacupuncture.ca](http://janemarshallacupuncture.ca) For appointments call: (902)404-3374*