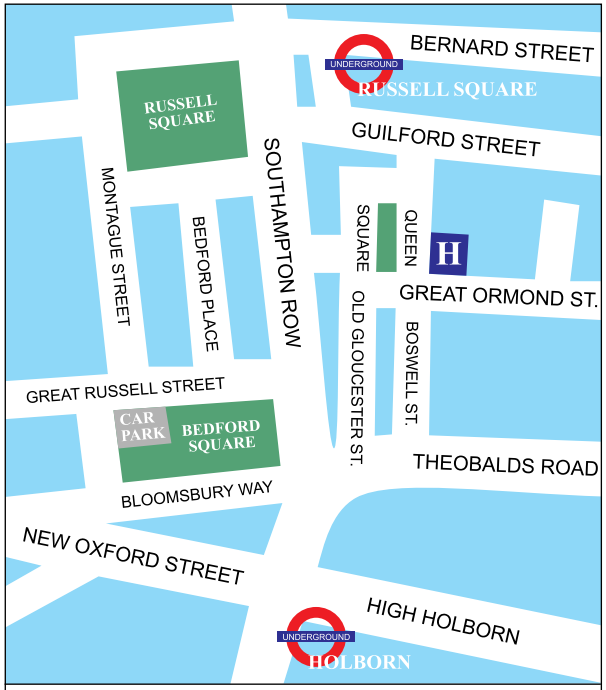
If you live or work in or within reach of central London, the BMAS London Teaching Clinic at the Royal London Hospital for Integrated Medicine may be able to offer you treatment. For further details or to make an appointment contact the Society's London office:

The British Medical Acupuncture Society
Royal London Hospital for Integrated Medicine,
60 Great Ormond Street, London WC1N 3HR
Telephone: 020 7713 9437 or
Freephone 0800 01 55 22 6
Email: london@thebmas.com



Directions:
By Tube - Russell Square Station (Piccadilly Line) or Holborn Station (Central Line)
By Bus - Cosmo Place, Southampton Row. Bus Nos 59, 68, 91 and 168 stop here. Walk through to Queen Square

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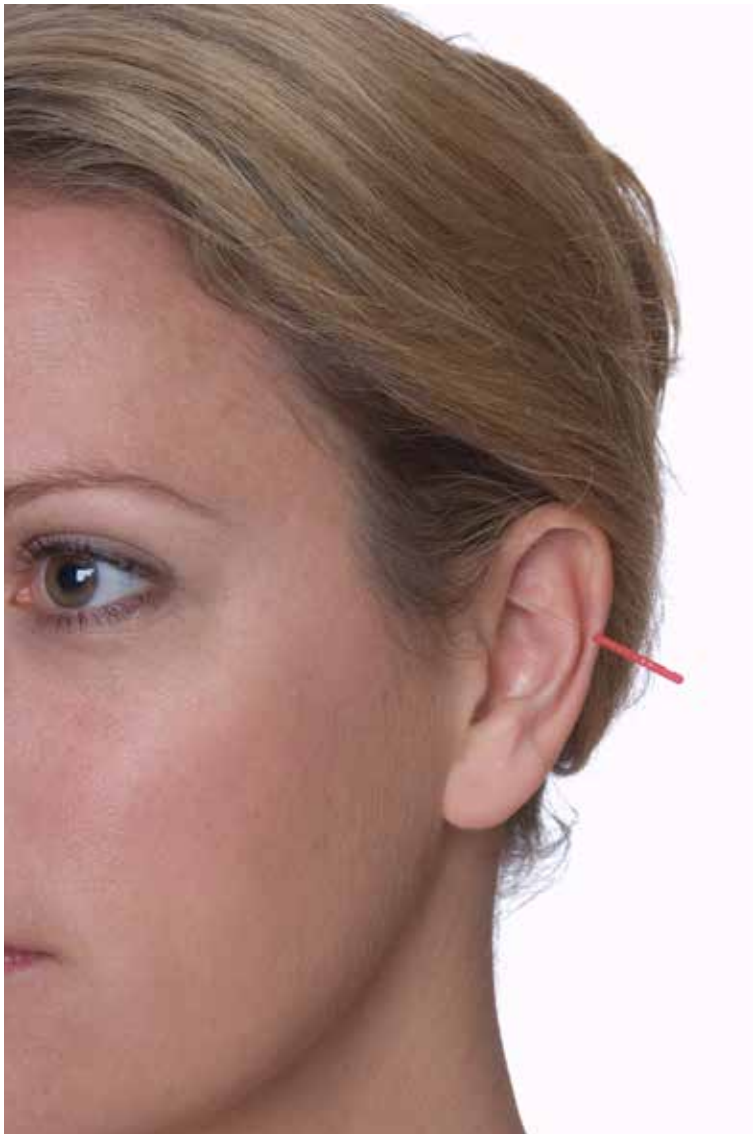
www.medical-acupuncture.co.uk

The British Medical Acupuncture Society

Patient Information



What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture treatment involves fine needles being inserted through the skin and left in position briefly, sometimes with manual or electrical stimulation. The number of needles varies but may be only two or three. Treatment might be once a week to begin with, then at longer intervals as the condition responds. A typical course of treatment lasts five to eight sessions. Each patient's case is assessed by the practitioner and treatment tailored to the individual.

Acupuncture stimulates the nerves in skin, muscle and other tissues, and can produce a variety of effects. We know that it increases the release of the body's natural painkillers, including endorphin and serotonin, in the pathways of both the spinal cord and the brain. This modifies the way pain signals are received by the brain.

Acupuncture can do more than simply reduce pain however: it seems to have a beneficial effect on the health of some individuals. Patients often notice an improved sense of wellbeing after treatment. Current research shows that acupuncture can have an effect on many of the body's systems – the nervous system, muscle tone, hormone production, circulation, and allergic responses, as well as the respiratory, digestive, urinary and reproductive systems.

What sort of conditions respond to acupuncture?

Acupuncture is proven to be effective in a wide range of painful conditions and is commonly used in short term relief of musculoskeletal pain, including chronic low back and neck pain, knee osteoarthritis pain, migraine and tension–type headache, and temporomandibular (jaw joint) disorders (TMD).

Some other situations in which acupuncture might be used are: improvement in the symptoms of overactive bladder syndrome; shoulder pain; post-operative nausea and vomiting.

Acupuncture – today and tomorrow

Techniques resembling acupuncture have been used for over 5000 years. A comprehensive system was developed in the Far East and this was first introduced into Europe in the 17th century. However, widespread interest in the technique did not develop until the political events of the 1970s allowed travel restrictions between East and West to be eased. Because of increasing public interest in the subject over the last thirty or forty years, considerable scientific research has been carried out, though much remains to be done. We now know much more about how acupuncture works and some of the myths about it can be laid to rest. Modern imaging techniques have demonstrated changes in brain activity – particularly those areas responsible for the processing of pain and suffering and as we learn more about it, the possibilities of using acupuncture alongside orthodox medicine increase. It is already available in most hospital pain clinics and is provided by a growing number of regulated healthcare professionals in other settings both within the NHS and privately.

Before starting a course of acupuncture the practitioner must be sure that all the necessary tests have been carried out with might point to any serious or potentially serious condition which may require other forms of treatment.

Where to go for acupuncture

The British Medical Acupuncture Society (BMAS) is a nationwide group of healthcare professionals who practise acupuncture alongside more conventional techniques. The Society believes that acupuncture has an important role to play in healthcare today, and that acupuncture should only be used by trained practitioners who can adequately assess the risks and benefits of applying the therapy. The ideal promoted by the BMAS is that acupuncture should be fully incorporated into orthodox medicine and used as one of the therapeutic tools available in treatment of a defined range of conditions.

All members of the British Medical Acupuncture Society are registered healthcare professionals with orthodox training in Western medical practices, who have undergone recognised acupuncture training. Members are subject to the Society's Code of Practice and Complaints Procedure in addition to statutory regulation within their primary profession. Your family doctor may be able to tell you the name of your nearest medical acupuncturist. Alternatively, the British Medical Acupuncture Society administration office can provide contact details of your nearest BMAS accredited medical acupuncturist either via the Find A Practitioner service on their website or by contacting the office:

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