Does Acupuncture and Acupressure Work for RA Pain Relief?

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Acupuncture and Acupressure for Rheumatoid Arthritis

If you check with your doctor on whether or not you should try acupuncture for rheumatoid arthritis, there's a good chance they haven't read about the studies that show distinct improvement. That's because there are an abundance of 'scientists' trying to make a name for themselves who do review articles of all the research that has been done on a topic, and then make a conclusion and judgment on whether or not something works.

The flaw in this review article process is that you can't compare apples to oranges. One study may have used five points to treat patients with rheumatoid arthritis while another study used electro-acupuncture. Yet another may have used moxibustion. I don't put much value in review studies and find individual studies more accurate.

Electro-Acupuncture Study Proves Effectiveness

As a matter of fact, there is a 2011 study on using electro-acupuncture in rheumatoid arthritis patients that you should hear about. As you may already know, acupuncture is the placement of very thin needles at certain points in the body that therapeutically affect the function of the body. Electro-acupuncture is a type of acupuncture where the needles are connected to wires that deliver a very small amount of voltage.

In this Chinese study, doctors tested the effects of electro-acupuncture on tumor necrosis factor-alpha and vascular endothelial growth factor in the blood and joints to see how well the acupuncture was working. There were 32 groups in the electro-acupuncture group and 32 in the regular acupuncture group. The points were selected from the yang meridian and local points that were painful. The patients received acupuncture every other day for a total of 30 sessions.

Both groups experienced significant lowering of the levels of the TNF-alpha and VEGF, but the VEGF levels were substantially lower in those receiving electro-acupuncture. The doctors concluded that electro-acupuncture was exceptionally beneficial for patients and should be used to boost up other clinical therapies.

Acupressure at home

Below are some points you can start using on your own for rheumatoid arthritis:

1. **Liver 2 Acupressure/Acupuncture Point**. This point is right between the big toe and the second toe.
2. **Gall Bladder 41 Acupuncture / Acupressure Point**. This point is also on the foot. It's between the 4th and 5th toes, about halfway between the web of the toes and the ankle bone.
3. **Kidney 3 Acupressure / Acupuncture Point**. To find this acupressure/acupuncture point for rheumatoid arthritis, you'll have to know that the Achilles tendon is the stringy tendon in the back of your lower leg that leads up to your calf muscle. You'll also need to know where your medial malleolus bone is; the bone on the inside of the ankle. The point is halfway between the medial malleolus and the Achilles tendon.
4. **Large Intestine 4 (Called Joining Valley)**. This point is on the back of the hand, not the palm. It's

located between the first and second metacarpal bones of the hand, in the middle of the second metacarpal bone, on the thumb side. This acupressure point for rheumatoid arthritis helps strengthen immunity.

Do get a professional acupuncturist to help you with rheumatoid arthritis. Since joint destruction occurs as a progression of the disease, playing around with acupressure – as fun as it is – could continue to worsen if you select incorrect points.