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Acupuncture for Athletes

With the commencement of the 2012 Summer Olympics, we wanted to dedicate this newsletter to athletes and discuss the many ways that Oriental medicine is used to help prevent and heal injuries and enhance athletic performance.

All athletes and coaches are involved in an ongoing search for ways to improve performance and gain a competitive edge over their rivals. Many are finding that acupuncture can often provide that edge.

By following the principles of traditional Oriental medicine, an acupuncture treatment can strengthen body function and restore internal harmony and balance. Professional sports teams and top athletes often have an acupuncturist on staff to treat injuries and keep them performing at their peak.



Some of the best Olympic athletes incorporate acupuncture into their wellness programs. China's most popular sportsman, the 7 foot 6 inch basketball center, Yao Ming, used acupuncture and Oriental medicine to help him recover after undergoing surgery on his ankle.

Chinese swimmer, Wang Qun, was photographed doing some last minute training in Beijing with round marks on her back from a traditional Oriental medicine treatment. The marks on the swimmer's back were caused by cupping. Cupping is a technique in which a glass cup or bamboo jar is suctioned onto the body. It is used to relieve muscle pain, especially back pain from stiffness or injury; and to clear congestion in the chest, which can occur with common colds and influenza.

Studies on Acupuncture to Enhance Athletic Performance

Studies have shown that acupuncture has measurable effects on the flow of blood to certain areas of the body, which could in turn boost athletic performance. One such study conducted at the Beijing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine involved athletes running 5,000 meters, and afterwards sitting for acupuncture treatments before they had a chance to catch their breath. The heart rates of the athletes who received the treatments recovered more quickly than those in the control group.

Another study published in the American Journal of Acupuncture measured the effects of acupuncture on anaerobic threshold and work capacity during exercise in healthy young males. Researchers found that individuals in the acupuncture treatment group had higher maximal exercise capacity and were able to perform higher workloads at the onset of blood lactate accumulation (OBLA) than individuals in the placebo group. The individuals that received acupuncture also had lower heart rates.

Acupuncture for Injury Rehabilitation

Acupuncture is well known for its effectiveness in reducing most types of pain, including pain from sports-related injuries. Sports injuries are predominantly due to trauma or overuse syndromes involving the musculoskeletal system and its soft tissues. Trauma to these soft tissues, including ligaments, tendons and muscles are generally the result from falls, blows, sprains/strains, collisions, compressions crushing and

disruptions of the healing processes due to inflammation.

Due to its broad range of applications, acupuncture can be used during any of the phases of the injury healing process. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine may be used to help decrease swelling, spasms and inflammation in addition to assisting in pain management, increasing range of motion and promoting healing.

The focus is not only to treat the injury but also to treat any underlying conditions that may predispose an individual to injuries. This is especially important when treating chronic or recurrent injuries that interfere with life activities or athletic performance.

Some sports injuries commonly treated by acupuncture and Oriental medicine include pulled muscles, neck pain, shoulder impingement, tennis elbow, lower back strain, pulled groin, hamstring strain, runner's knee, shin splints, ankle sprain, tendonitis, and arch pain.

If you have suffered an injury or would like to speed your post surgical recovery, acupuncture can help. Call today for more information or to schedule an appointment!

Injury Prevention and Healing

Don't let your pledge to get into shape be derailed by a sports injury.

Fitness clubs across the country are full of enthusiastic individuals giving it their all to get fit or drop a few pounds. Unfortunately, some of these new athletes try to do too much too quickly, and can pay a painful price.

Recent studies show that acupuncture effectively treats sports injuries such as strains; sprains; neck, shoulder, elbow, wrist, hip, knee and ankle pain; swollen muscles and shin splints.



Treatment for a sports injury with acupuncture and Oriental medicine has two objectives:

1. Reduce pain and inflammation of the injured area. There is evidence that acupuncture can aid healing and resolution of injuries, including reducing pain, increasing local microcirculation and attracting white blood cells to the area, both of which speed the healing rate, and aid dispersal of swelling and bruising.
2. Prevent further injuries and enhance athletic performance. The best way to approach a fitness program without causing injury is not to dive in, but to take it slow and get the joints and muscles you haven't used in a while ready to be used again.

If you suffer a setback in your fitness routine, call for more information about treatment options.
