



# Acupuncture at Dorothy House



# What is Acupuncture?

**Acupuncture involves the insertion of very fine stainless steel needles into the skin. It has been used in China for over 2000 years and increasingly in Western medicine, with a growing body of scientific evidence and clinical research supporting its effectiveness.**

**At Dorothy House, we can use acupuncture to assist with symptom management, for example, to reduce pain, alleviate muscle spasm, induce general relaxation, improve sleep pattern. Other specific symptoms for which acupuncture might have a beneficial effect can be discussed with a member of staff.**

## How does Acupuncture work?

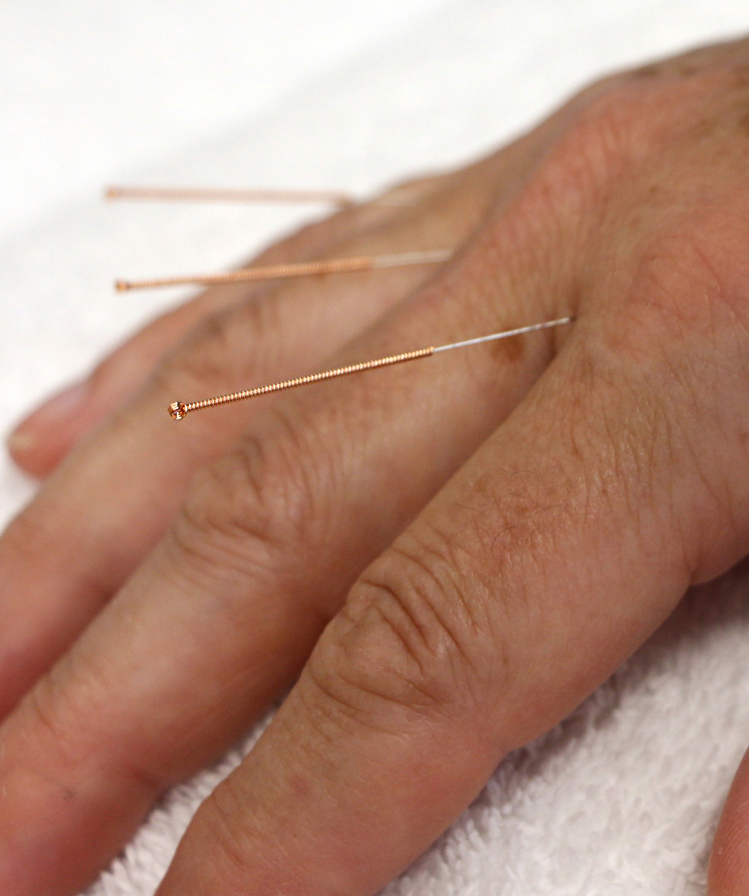
Acupuncture stimulates the body to produce its own pain and stress-relieving chemicals. It might promote sleep by stimulating the release of melatonin, and might encourage a sense of well-being by stimulating the release of serotonin.

Acupuncture also stimulates nerve fibres to block out pain signals and helps reduce the sensitivity of tender points in the body.

## What will happen when I come to Dorothy House for an appointment?

You will have to be able to travel to Winsley in order to receive Acupuncture. You should allow at least one hour for your appointment. You need to be prepared to expose the area(s) required for treatment, which might not necessarily be the painful area. You will need to be able to sit or lie still for up to 30 minutes. Your physiotherapist will carry out an assessment to ascertain whether acupuncture is appropriate for you.

The needles are inserted through the skin either at the sites where you feel your symptoms, away from that area, or a combination of both. The number of needles used will vary according to your condition, but can range from 1-10 in your first session. The needles can



be left in for up to 30 minutes. During the treatment, your physiotherapist might stimulate the needles by gently rotating them.

Acupuncture should not be painful. The needles used are approximately the width of a human hair, so acupuncture does not feel like having an injection. When the needles are inserted, you might feel a temporary, sharp pricking sensation. During the treatment itself, you may experience a feeling of warmth or 'fullness', heaviness, pins and needles, numbness, tension around the needle, or a mild ache or discomfort.

You might feel a little light-headed or relaxed. It should not feel unpleasant. These are signs that your body is reacting to the acupuncture. You might not even feel the needle at all.



The needles are removed at the end of the session. You will be asked to rest for a few minutes before you leave. Some people continue to feel tired after a treatment and therefore driving is not recommended. It is also advised that you eat something within two hours of your appointment time.

### **How many sessions will I have?**

At Dorothy House, generally we aim to see patients once a week for approximately six weeks, but the number of treatment sessions will depend on you, your condition and your physiotherapist's assessment. It is generally clear after around three sessions whether or not you will benefit from acupuncture and if treatment should be continued.

## Can anyone have Acupuncture?

Your physiotherapist will ask you about the following issues during your assessment. Certain conditions might stop you receiving acupuncture or mean the treatment should be used with caution. To reduce the risk of adverse effects resulting from acupuncture treatment, the questions need to be answered honestly and to the best of your knowledge.

1. Any reactions to previous needling procedures, such as acupuncture or injections.
2. Any previous epileptic seizures or 'fits'
3. Whether you have diabetes
4. Any circulation problems
5. Use of blood thinning treatment
6. Results of any recent blood tests
7. Any blood borne viruses such as HIV, AIDS or Hepatitis
8. Any heart failure, abnormal heart rhythms, heart valve problems
9. Pacemaker/any electrical implants
10. Low blood pressure or fainting
11. Any metal allergies
12. Any skin conditions or fragile/infected skin
13. Lymphoedema or swelling

## Is Acupuncture safe?

At Dorothy House, acupuncture is administered by physiotherapists who are registered with the Acupuncture Association of Chartered Physiotherapists (AACP) and as such adhere to strict safety and hygiene guidelines. Your AACP-registered physiotherapist is also bound by a code of Member's Professional Values and Behaviour through the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) and is regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

The needles used by your physiotherapist are individually packaged, sterile and disposed of after one use. They are supplied in guide tubes for easy insertion which means there is no risk of anything touching the needle during the process.

## Are there any side effects to Acupuncture?

Any side effects tend to be mild and short-term.

The following are the known (based on research evidence) possible adverse effects associated with acupuncture. Your physiotherapist will discuss them with you if you have any concerns.

- Bleeding and bruising (3%)
- Mild aggravation of symptoms (3%, of which 70-80% show subsequent improvement)
- Mild pain at needle site (1%)
- Drowsiness (1%)
- Dizziness (0.6%)
- Pain not at needle site (0.5%)
- Nausea (0.3%)
- Feeling faint (0.3%)
- Stuck or bent needle (0.1%)
- Headache (0.1%)
- Allergy or infection (up to 0.2%)
- Pneumothorax (0.0002% - less than 2 per 1 million)

Although Acupuncture is an established procedure, there might be other adverse side effects that have not been recorded. If you experience any of the above, or notice anything unusual about your health following your treatment, you should contact your physiotherapist or GP straight away.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding acupuncture or would like more information please speak to your Dorothy House professional.

[dorothyhouse.org.uk](https://dorothyhouse.org.uk)

**Dorothy House Hospice Care**

Winsley, Bradford on Avon, BA15 2LE

Telephone: 0345 0130 555

Registered Charity No. 275745

