

Most people's experience of needles is of those used in injections and blood tests. Acupuncture needles bear little resemblance to these. They are much finer and are solid rather than hollow. When the needle is inserted, the sensation is often described as a tingling or dull ache. Needles are inserted either for a second or two, or may be left in place for 30 minutes or more, depending on the effect required. During treatment, patients commonly experience a heaviness in the limbs or a pleasant feeling of relaxation. The benefits of acupuncture frequently include more than just relief from a particular condition. Many people find that it can also lead to increased energy levels, better appetite and sleep as well as an enhanced sense of overall well being.

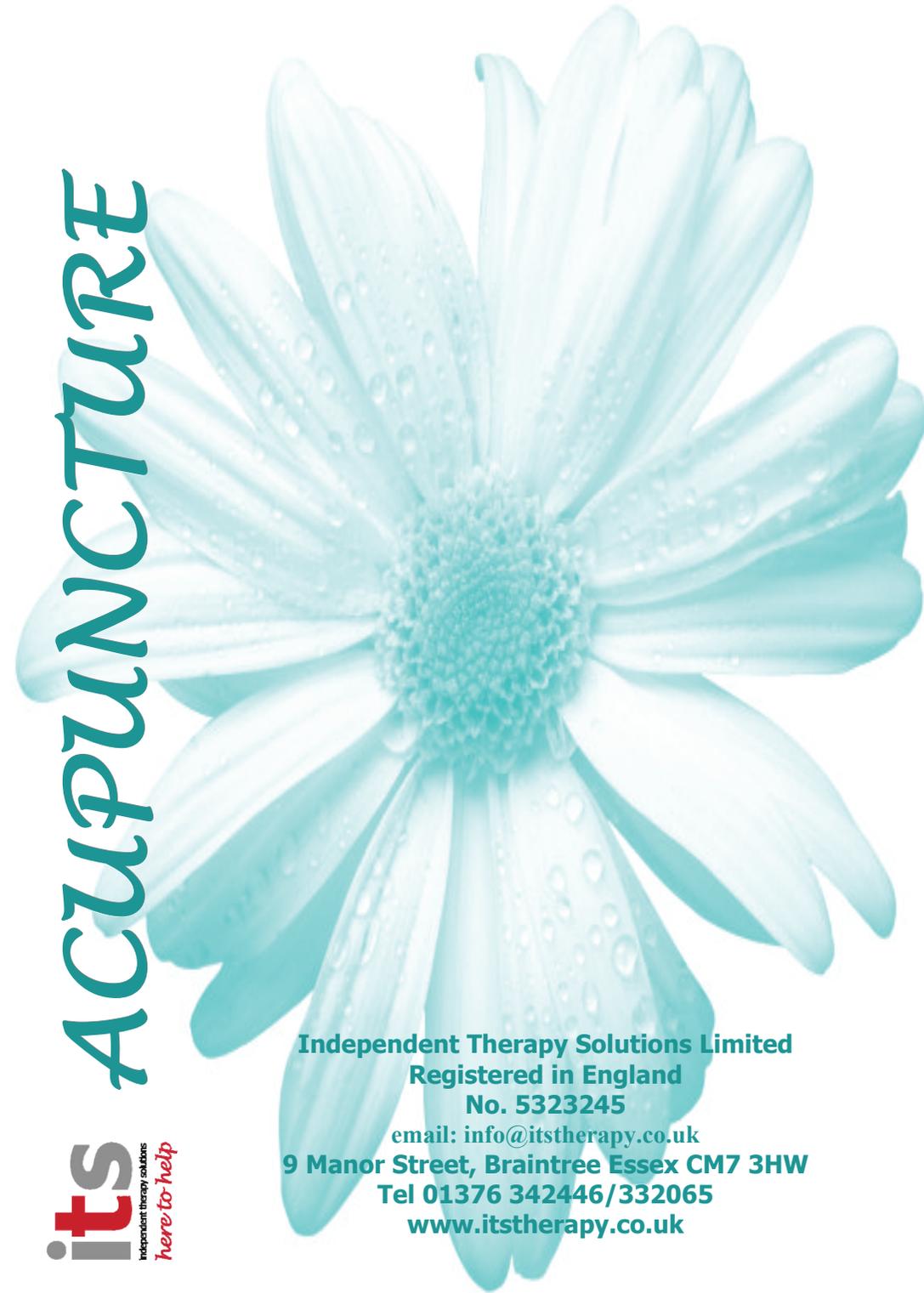


**48 hours notice of cancellation is required,  
or the full fee is payable.**

*Independent Therapy Solutions exists  
to provide a range of  
high quality interventions  
to people experiencing physical,  
emotional, psychological or behavioural difficulties  
to facilitate change and well being.  
Releasing the unique potential of the  
individual through  
non-judgemental, self-empowering support.*



# ACUPUNCTURE



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Acupuncture is an holistic approach to health based on over 2000 years of developments and refinements in the Far East. Western-style or medical acupuncture is a more recent development practised predominantly by doctors and physiotherapists which uses a more limited range of acupuncture techniques on the basis of a western medical diagnosis. Traditionally, acupuncture is an holistic approach to the management of disease as well as the maintenance of health. The skill of an acupuncturist lies in their ability to make a traditional diagnosis from what is often a complex pattern of disharmony. The exact pattern and degree of disharmony is unique to each individual and with traditional acupuncture will be treated as such with a personalised treatment plan.

Although often described as a means of pain relief, it is in fact used to treat people with a wide range of illnesses. Its focus is on improving the overall well being of the patient, rather than the isolated treatment of specific symptoms. According to traditional Chinese philosophy, our health is dependent on the body's motivating energy - known as Qi - moving in a smooth and balanced way through a series of meridians (channels) beneath the skin.

Qi consists of equal and opposite qualities - Yin and Yang - and when these become unbalanced, illness may result. By inserting fine needles into the channels of energy, an acupuncturist can stimulate the body's own healing response and help restore its natural balance. The flow of Qi can be disturbed by a number of factors. These include emotional states such as anxiety, stress, anger, fear or grief, poor nutrition, weather conditions, hereditary factors, infections, poisons and trauma. The principal aim of acupuncture in treating the whole person is to recover the equilibrium between the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of the individual.

Your first consultation may be longer than subsequent sessions. The acupuncturist needs to assess your general state of health, in order to identify the underlying pattern of disharmony and give you the most effective treatment.

You will be asked about your current symptoms and what treatment you have received so far, your medical history and that of your close family, your diet, digestive system, sleeping patterns and emotional state. To discover how the energies are flowing in your body, the acupuncturist is likely to feel your pulses on both wrists, noting their quality, rhythm and strength.

The structure, colour and coating of your tongue also gives a good guide to your physical health. Once enough information has been gathered to determine the likely causes of your problems, the acupuncturist can select the most appropriate treatment.

The aim is to discover which energy channels need adjusting for your specific complaint to improve, and which require treatment to boost your overall energy and vitality.

Loose, comfortable clothing should be worn, and you should be aware that the acupuncturist may need to access points on your torso as well as on your arms and legs.

Stimulation of specific areas on or beneath the skin affects the functioning of certain organs in the body. However, those areas may not be close to the part of the body where the problem is experienced. For example, although you may suffer from headaches, needles may be inserted in your foot or hand.

There are around 500 such acupuncture points on the body, and a properly trained and experienced acupuncturist will use a selection of perhaps ten or twelve of these for each treatment. It is quite usual that, during a course of treatment, different points will be selected as the patients condition changes.

The acupuncturist may supplement the needle treatment with moxa, a smouldering herb which is used to warm acupuncture points to encourage the body's energy to flow smoothly.