

# INSOMNIA

## How Acupuncture Helps



Sleepless nights happen to almost everyone at some point, however ongoing insomnia can indicate a deeper issue and could lead to further health concerns. Unfortunately, a common approach to treating insomnia includes prescription sleep medications, which can cause side effects or

### QUICK FACTS

Tips for healthy sleep:

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.
- Exercise regularly, but not within a few hours of bedtime.
- Don't eat large meals before bed.
- Try not to nap. If you really need to nap, try to keep it short, no more than 45 minutes.
- Limit caffeine, alcohol and nicotine.
- Relax. Make sure to wind down before going to sleep.

When insomnia becomes ongoing, or chronic, your body is unable to get the rest and renewal it needs for you to feel your best. In fact, a lack of good sleep can cause problems such as difficulty concentrating, diminished energy and trouble performing everyday tasks. Since sleep strengthens the immune system, insomnia can leave you susceptible to many other health concerns.

**Acupuncture Can Help** According to the theories of acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), conditions such as insomnia are a sign of an imbalance in Qi (pronounced "chee"), the vital energy that animates the body and protects it from illness.

According to TCM, there are three organs associated with insomnia, the spleen, heart and kidneys (adrenal system). When there is an imbalance in the spleen, one may have trouble falling asleep due to overthinking. A heart imbalance can be due to anxiety, which also makes it hard to fall and stay asleep. Lastly, if the kidneys and adrenal system are out of balance, the body may experience a fluctuation of cold and hot temperatures, which can be very uncomfortable and cause restlessness and insomnia.

These imbalances can stem from a number of causes such as stress, anxiety, medications, depression, hormones and chronic pain. To

dependence. This is one of the many reasons to consider an all-natural approach to treating your sleep problems. Acupuncture can be effective in improving your sleep quality without the side effects of sleep medications.

Occasional insomnia is a very common problem, affecting about one in four Americans. It can happen to anyone, but is more common in older adults.

In addition to being frustrating, insomnia is more than just an annoyance.

determine the underlying causes of insomnia, your acupuncturist will take many factors into account including your lifestyle, as well as your emotional and mental well-being. Your acupuncturist will then work to restore the body's natural balance by carefully inserting fine, sterile needles at specific acupuncture meridian points along the body.

Other therapies such as aromatherapy, yoga or meditation may be suggested in addition to acupuncture treatments. You may find you sleep better after your very first acupuncture session, though acupuncture works best after a series of treatments.

**A Natural Way to Heal** Acupuncture is a whole-body approach to healing; it takes a holistic and nurturing approach to healing the body. This is done by carefully inserting fine sterile needles to stimulate important acupuncture meridian points found across the body to help promote healing.

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**Symptoms of insomnia include**

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Waking up during the night
- Waking up too early
- Daytime fatigue and irritability
- Frustration and moodiness

In addition to the insertion of needles, other techniques are used to stimulate the body's natural healing abilities and to bring about homeostasis.

Acupuncture meridian points activate the body's innate healing abilities acupuncturists call Qi (chee). According to Traditional Chinese

Medicine, Qi is the vital energy that animates the body and protects it from illness. Qi flows through pathways called meridians and provides nourishment to the body's cells, tissues, muscles, organs, and glands. When there is an imbalance or blockage in the flow of Qi, symptoms associated with the condition or illness may appear.

Most people experience little or no pain when receiving acupuncture - in fact, many people experience a deep sense of relief, relaxation and find acupuncture helps with their specific symptoms and signs.

From a modern scientific perspective, stimulation of acupuncture meridian points causes the release of a multitude of nervous system chemicals in our brain, spinal cord, and muscles that help restore the body's ability to heal naturally.

These chemicals provide tremendous health benefits, whether it is influencing your body to heal more quickly, or simply altering how you may be experiencing your pain. Regardless, the healing and regenerative properties of acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine are truly amazing; the only way to find out if acupuncture is the perfect treatment plan for you is to give it a try.

**References**

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