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Acupuncture for sports injuries

Background information about acupuncture

Traditional Acupuncture is a safe and effective system of medicine that originated in China thousands of years ago and still forms an important part of mainstream healthcare there today. In Traditional Acupuncture we view the human body in a holistic way. We focus on the health of the person as a whole and emphasise the connection between physical and emotional health. Every person is unique and one individual may become ill for different reasons to another so in Traditional Acupuncture we design each treatment according to the individual's needs.

Traditional Acupuncture believes that good health involves a continuous smooth flow of energy (Qi) through channels within the body. Illness, injury or emotional stress occur when Qi is out of balance or unable to circulate freely. Acupuncture works to maintain the body's equilibrium and the flow of Qi, by inserting fine needles into specific points on the body. Someone receiving acupuncture will often report an increased sense of general well-being as well as an improvement in the symptoms which brought them to treatment.

Sports injuries

Sports injuries are common, varying from strains to major complex trauma. Injuries can be acute, the result of a sudden impact or awkward movement, or chronic, developing over time due to continual use of the same joints or muscle groups. Sprain and strain of the joint and surrounded tissue are one of the most common sports related injuries (sprain involves the ligament and strain involves muscle or tendon). Besides pain, the typical inflammatory response may include swelling of the injured area, redness or purple skin discoloration, and reduced range of motion of the joint.

The aims of any therapy are to relieve pain, control inflammation, and accelerate repair. Also, there should be restoration of function and recovery of muscle power. Conventional approaches include

RICE (rest, ice, compression and elevation), anti-inflammatory drugs and analgesics, immobilisation, corticosteroid injections, physiotherapy and surgery.

How does acupuncture help?

Acupuncture has a very successful record with sports injuries. Acupuncture points are utilized to address the injury and can help to alleviate the pain and suppress inflammation and swelling. The use of acupuncture to treat acute injuries from intense or repetitive physical activity began centuries ago. It was, and still is, one of the primary means of quick healing for the martial arts. These days many professional sports teams have acupuncturists on staff to decrease healing times and resolve stubborn ailments. It is used by the England Rugby Team and British Olympic Team. Even as long ago as 1999, 54% of football teams in the premier league were using acupuncture.

Pain is one of the most common complaints in sports injuries followed by reduced function. 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.

Acupuncture may help relieve symptoms of sports injuries, and improve repair by:

- Stimulating nerves located in muscles and other tissues, which leads to release of endorphins and other neurohumoral factors, and changes the processing of pain in the brain and spinal cord
- Releasing myofascial trigger points to reduce muscle tension
- Reducing inflammation, by promoting release of vascular and immunomodulatory factors
- Improving muscle stiffness and joint mobility by increasing local microcirculation which aids dispersal of swelling.
- breaking down scar tissue
- promoting faster recovery after training sessions

As well as needles, I may use other Chinese medicine techniques to help your injury, such as cupping, guasha, moxibustion, tuina massage or electro acupuncture

Need more information?

Give me a call or drop me an email to discuss how acupuncture can help your condition, or any other query you might have about treatment.