

## Grin and Bear it' Brits need to pin point their pain

We're famously a nation that doesn't like to make a fuss but new statistics from the British Acupuncture Council reveal that when it comes to pain nearly half of UK (44%) just grin and bear it which could impact long term health and wellbeing.

According to the report released today to mark Acupuncture Awareness Week (7th-13th March 2016), almost three in ten Brits (29%) exercise more now than they did ten years ago but more than half (52%) say they've been injured during sport in the past and one in three (30%) claim to have never recovered from their injuries.

To overcome a sporting injury, almost three in five people (56%) say they take oral painkillers, and nearly a third (32%) turn to ice and heat packs, compared to just 11% who opt for traditional acupuncture.

Nuala Price, a qualified member of the British Acupuncture Council comments: 'Many people put up with pain when they don't need to. Often discomfort from musculoskeletal problems can be alleviated with the correct diagnosis and treatment. Traditional acupuncture is an evidence based therapy that has been shown to help reduce pain and swelling, increase blood flow to promote recovery and help restore movement at the site of injury.'

The report of 2,000 UK adults revealed nearly three quarters of people (73%) have never tried traditional acupuncture with 3 in 10 Brits (30%) admitting they're unaware of how the therapy could help them.

Nuala Price from Surrey Acupuncture Clinic continues: 'In my experience, a lot of patients either ignore their injury or opt for painkillers and anti-inflammatory drugs without ever being physically examined. Painkillers often mask the problem and don't always address any potential underlying issues. Traditional acupuncture can help to identify the root cause of a problem, improving a patient's understanding and management of symptoms for a more positive long-term outcome.'

Based on ancient principles which go back nearly two thousand years, traditional acupuncture involves placing extremely fine, sterile needles painlessly at specific points on the body to trigger a healing response and restore balance.

'Traditional acupuncture is one of the oldest documented systems of medicine in history based on the meridian system and the movement of energy around the body, says Nuala. 'It is believed that pain or illness can occur if the flow of energy gets blocked or disrupted. Traditional acupuncture improves the body's natural healing process by stimulating specific points on the body to regulate the flow of energy once again.'

Despite traditional acupuncture's widely recognised health benefits, statistics also show that more than a fifth (21%) of people say they are too scared to try it because of the needles.

Nuala continues: 'Most people who attend traditional acupuncture for the first time are a little nervous even if they don't say so. I make sure they understand the acupuncture treatment process thoroughly, including how it's going to feel and that the needles are single-use, sterile and extremely fine. Acupuncture needles are also nothing like hypodermic needles used for taking blood so I tend to show them what they look like to put their mind at rest. To guarantee a high standard of safety and care, it's important to find a fully qualified and insured acupuncturist registered with the British Acupuncture Council.'

### Here Nuala's top tips for managing musculoskeletal pain

1. Seek professional advice and get a diagnosis and treatment early.
2. Make sure you understand, in conjunction with your therapist, what your problem is and how best to treat or manage it.

3. Follow your rehabilitation plan carefully and consult with your therapist if you are unsure of what you are doing.
4. Avoid or at the very least be careful of, self-treating via internet information as some can be inaccurate and misleading. The wrong exercises can aggravate injuries and increase the pain and overall healing time.
5. Be prepared to work hard in your rehab and also be patient with your injury. The body takes time to heal, even with the correct diagnosis and early treatment.
6. When exercising make sure you warm up and cool down after the main exercise routine is completed. Bring the body back to its normal resting state with care. Make sure your warm up and cool down exercises are done with the same mental and physical focus as the main exercise itself. Don't think of exercise as just going to the gym or playing sports, exercise can be gardening, walking the dog or physical activities at work too.
7. Posture is something all people should be aware of throughout their lives in all activities they do, both work and leisure. If you feel pain when doing an activity of any type or even when resting ask yourself why? Can changing position and correcting posture relieve the pain? Poor posture over a long time can be the cause of chronic pain in later life. Look after the body now in order to keep it healthy in the future. Get a professional practitioner to give you advice or assess your posture if you are not sure.
8. Moderate your exercise with appropriate rest. The body needs time to recuperate after activity, especially when recovering from any type of injury. Take into account your fitness level and age to gauge your exercise intensity.
9. Traditional acupuncture can help with most musculoskeletal injuries, its holistic diagnostic methods can help not only treat the initial injury and aid its recovery but also highlight underlying weaknesses which may help in avoiding further injuries in the future.
10. Don't be afraid to try traditional acupuncture alongside other forms of treatment, it has no side effects and will only help speed up recovery if administered correctly.

**To find out more about traditional acupuncture visit [www.introducingacupuncture.co.uk](http://www.introducingacupuncture.co.uk).**

**To find a fully qualified traditional acupuncturist in your area contact the British Acupuncture Council, on 020 8735 0400 or visit [www.acupuncture.org.uk](http://www.acupuncture.org.uk)**

**Notes :**

<sup>1</sup> 2,000 UK adults were questioned by One Poll, November 2015

**About Surrey Acupuncture Clinic**

Nuala is an extensively trained Acupuncturist who has been in private practice for 10 years. She has treated a wide range of conditions including gynecological issues, pregnancy, infertility, assisted fertility, musculoskeletal disorders, stress, anxiety, addiction/withdrawal, pain management and menopause.

For more information see [www.surreyacupunctureclinic.co.uk](http://www.surreyacupunctureclinic.co.uk) and to book call Nuala on 07808 938223.

**About the British Acupuncture Council**

The British Acupuncture Council (BACC) is the UK's largest governing body of traditional acupuncture with over 3,000 members - each of whom is an accredited practitioner providing the highest standard of professional care to patients.

BACc members practise a traditional, holistic style of acupuncture diagnosis and treatment based on a system developed and refined over 2,000 years. This style of acupuncture differs from that used by medical practitioners such as physiotherapists where the technique of 'dry needling' is adopted. Although both practises use needles, dry needling aims for 'trigger points' whereas traditional acupuncture is based on the meridian system. Medical acupuncturists usually have fewer training hours in the technique of acupuncture and use it as part of their practice alongside conventional treatments.

To achieve BACc membership, practitioners must first undertake extensive training in acupuncture (minimum three years full-time at BSc or BA degree level) which includes physiology, anatomy and other biomedical sciences appropriate to the practice of acupuncture and their expert practice skills are maintained by following a mandatory individual programme of continuing professional development (CPD). BACc membership is also a mark of assurance of high standards in professionalism, training and safety.

The British Acupuncture Council is also accredited by the Professional Standards Authority under its Accredited Voluntary Registers (AVR) scheme. Being accredited under the AVR scheme offers enhanced protection to anyone looking for an acupuncturist – people now have the option of seeking practitioners on a register that has been vetted and approved.