

FACT SHEET

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# Acupuncture



## What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture involves the use of thin single-use needles that are inserted in the body at very specific points. The treatment is used for pain relief, healing, and general wellbeing.

Because acupuncture can affect the whole body, change can occur both physically and emotionally.

The main types of acupuncture practiced in New Zealand are:

- Trigger point or dry needling.
- Western medical – based on western concepts of anatomy and physiology.
- Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), based on Chinese theories of energy balancing and movement.



Acupuncture can be considered to treat a wide variety of conditions, for example:

- Acute and persistent pain (such as back and neck pain)
- Phantom limb pain
- Muscle and joint problems
- Headaches

## When acupuncture might not be suitable

There are no special reasons why most people can't have acupuncture treatment.

However, it is important to advise the therapist if you have any of the following conditions:

- Pregnancy
- Bleeding disorders
- Diabetes
- Any form of cancer
- Hepatitis
- HIV/Aids
- Epilepsy or seizures
- Skin infections
- Heart conditions – especially if a pacemaker is in place.

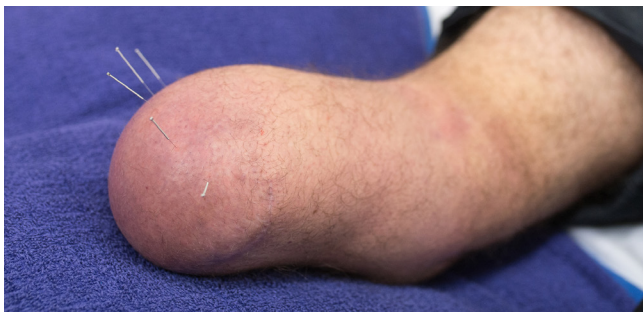


## What is involved?

The therapist will record your consent to acupuncture after completing an assessment.

The therapist will insert the sterile disposable needles at specific points that are relevant to your presentation. The points used will either be local to the area OR well away from the actual part of the body being treated.

The needles are kept in place for 5-30 minutes depending on the treatment.



Sometimes needles are also placed in the ear to help treat pain relief, helpful when treating phantom limb pain

Phantom pain is common following limb amputation. It is thought to result from a system of pathophysiological mechanisms – peripheral, spinal, central and psychological. Treatment is primarily medical, using antidepressants and anticonvulsant medications.

Whilst the studies of acupuncture for phantom limb pain have been small they demonstrate potential benefits in a number of conditions with chronic pain.

To read more about **acupuncture**, please visit [www.acupuncture.org.nz](http://www.acupuncture.org.nz).



For more helpful resources, please visit our website: [www.pw.co.nz/resources](http://www.pw.co.nz/resources)

## How do I find an acupuncturist or physiotherapist acupuncturist?

Physiotherapist acupuncturists are listed on the Physiotherapy Acupuncture Association of New Zealand (PAANZ) website, a special interest group of Physiotherapy New Zealand.

Refer to the public register of members at [www.paanz.org.nz](http://www.paanz.org.nz) or [www.acupuncture.org.nz](http://www.acupuncture.org.nz).

## Contacts

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