

# Acupuncture and Sport

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## What is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is part of a larger health care system known as Traditional Chinese Medicine or TCM for short, that works by encouraging the body to heal itself. Studies have shown that acupuncture releases a number of hormones including endorphins, serotonin, and neuropeptides/neurotransmitters that aid in pain relief and relaxation.

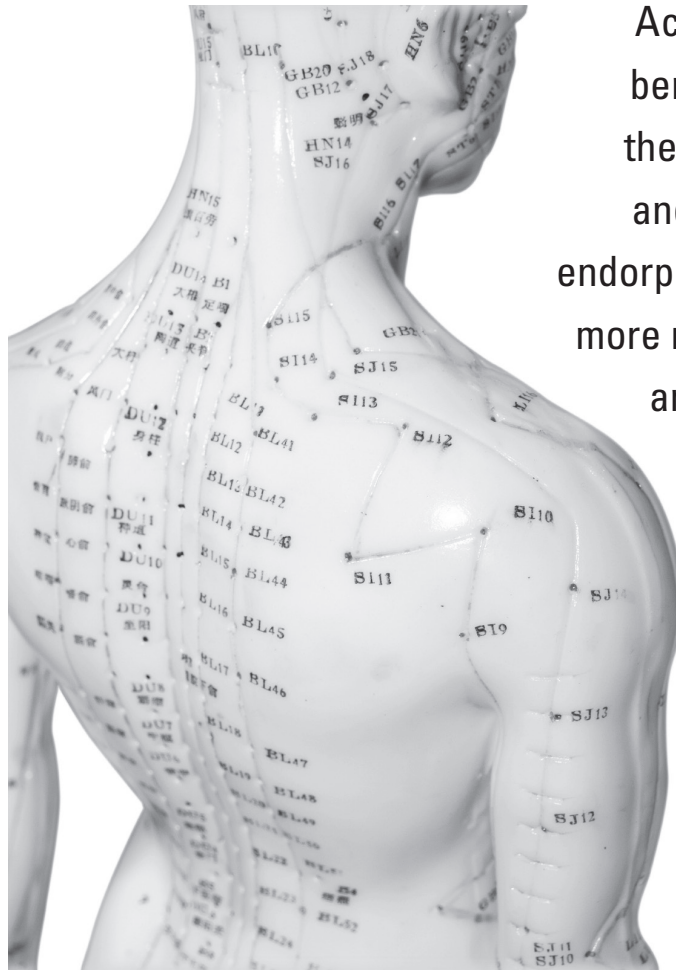
## How can Acupuncture help acute injuries?

Sprains and strains are some of the most common sports related injuries. Besides pain, the typical inflammatory response may include swelling, redness or bruising, and reduced range of motion. In addition to conventional R.I.C.E (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation) treatment, acupuncture can be very helpful in reducing inflammation and swelling, expediting recovery by increasing local microcirculation, and attracting white blood cells to the area, both of which speed the rate of healing.

## How can Acupuncture aid in recovery?

There are a growing number of athletes and recreational enthusiasts who are using acupuncture as means to recover faster and finding it to be the "cure" for everything from pain and fatigue to performance anxiety and depression all in the twirl of a few tiny needles.

By improving the circulation of blood, acupuncture can assist in the clearing of lactic acid thereby boosting recovery times. Also, acupuncture has a beneficial effect on the nervous system, and naturally boosts endorphins producing a more relaxed, focused, and happy athlete. Because acupuncture works naturally with the body's systems, there is never any fear either of testing positive in drug screening at competitive levels of sport.



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(qi stagnation = swelling, blood stagnation = bruising).

Chronic injuries on the other hand, can take place over a period of time (ex: overuse injuries, improper healing of an acute injury). Because TCM is a holistic based practice, its focus is on what factors may predispose an individual to a

particular condition (living environment, diet, weather etc). Most often, chronic injuries are leftover deficiencies of a previous injury that need to be nourished and corrected for complete recovery (ex: qi deficiency, blood deficiency, dampness (bi) in the joints/collaterals/meridians). Chronic injuries take longer to rectify.

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## Mechanisms of Injury - TCM Perspective

TCM has a unique view of how the body functions, and within its philosophy, all systems are broken down into categories of *zang/fu* organ function, direction, flavour, colour, emotion, element etc.

Acute injuries from the TCM medical perspective, like in its Western counterpart happen suddenly. These injuries involve disruption in the flow of the *qi*, blood and body fluids, within the channels and *zang/fu* organs. Depending on the mechanism of injury, one pattern may dominate over the other, but most commonly present as co-occurring qi and blood stagnation

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For example: Tendons are related to the liver according to the Five Element theory of TCM. The liver has many functions according to TCM, one of which being to supply blood

to all parts of the body, and ensure that the qi flows appropriately. When an athlete's intensity increases with training, the liver energy is stressed to accommodate this increase in demand for blood. Unless appropriately nourished and supported, its function will be impaired resulting in blood deficiency or other qi mechanism problems. What ensues often are the signs and symptoms related to that of tendinopathy. Additionally, frustration and anger are signs and symptoms of a liver out of balance and for those in high-stress jobs who use athletics to smooth out their days, may find they are more prone to tendon issues as the liver is already 'stressed' out.

Muscles on the other hand are related to the spleen according to the Five Element Theory. The spleen's basic functions are transporting and transforming nutrients, and producing blood (generating qi and blood). Another aspect unique to the spleen is that it "rules" the extremities making the spleen (and stomach) extremely important to the health of those participating in sports. Injury to the spleen's energy results in digestive imbalances and/or sensitivities, fatigue, bloating and muscular weakness. Furthermore, when the spleen becomes impaired or obstructed, the muscles risk malnourishment resulting in frequent tears, or ongoing tightness, stiffness and/or general malaise (as often seen in overtraining syndromes).

Regardless of your current state of health or injury, acupuncture and TCM are safe and effective therapies that can help to restore balance and speed your recovery – getting you back on track faster.

Other therapies often used in the treatment of sports injury include Cupping, Tui Na (Chinese Medical Massage), Electro-Acupuncture, Motor-Point Therapy and Self-Administered Acupressure.

To learn more about TCM and Acupuncture, or to book an appointment, please contact Dr. Kim Graham at Moveo Sport & Rehabilitation Centre in North Vancouver at 604-984-8731.



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### Why Pure Clean Powder?

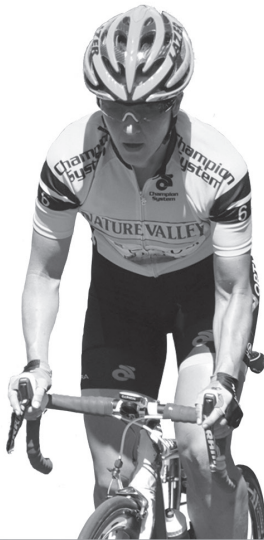
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(pure. clean. beet juice powder.)



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**Jade Wilcoxson**

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