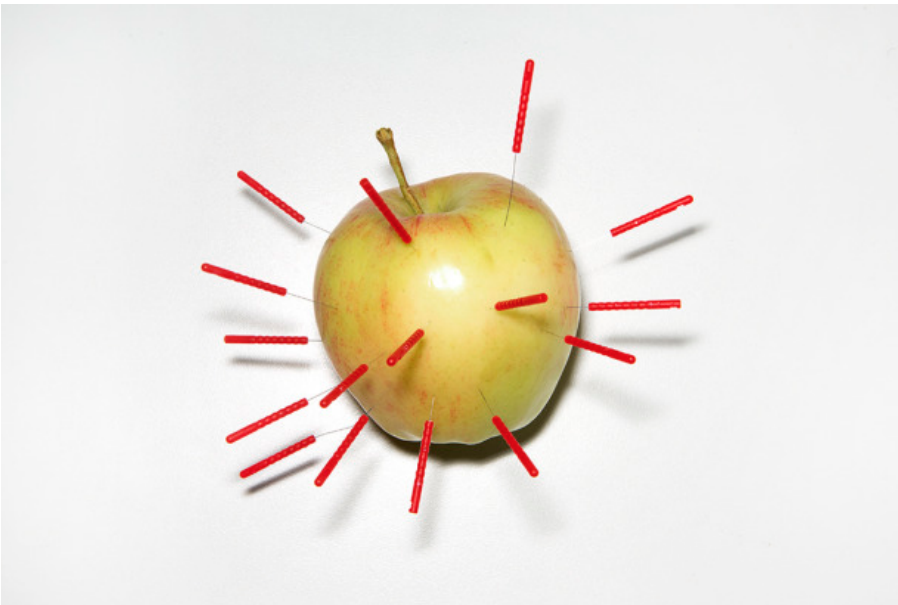




By VICTORIA LEWIS

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Learning To Love Acupuncture

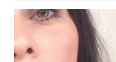


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REPLIES

I have been a reluctant acupuncture convert for almost 10 years now. Admittedly, I don't know a single person who is actually excited by the prospect of having several dozen needles stuck into their skin on a regular basis. The first time I tried it (as a last ditch attempt to cure my seasonal allergies), my mom dragged me, kicking and screaming, into the doctor's office where I alternated between resentful sulking and accusatory exclamations of pain.

But then something crazy happened: I resembled the sneezy, red-eyed lady from the Claritin commercials no longer. And that was only after a single treatment.

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needles and I've been known to negotiate the number of points he is "allowed" to do in a treatment. But I keep going back again and again because, frankly, acupuncture *works*. (If you don't trust me, ask [Lindsay](#).)

I will tell you that if a fear of needles is what's keeping you from trying a treatment, you can stop being a baby now. At worst, the (so-tiny-they're-bendable) needles feel a lot like an annoying sibling pinching you and at best, they feel like absolutely nothing. According to Paul, I am in the 3 percent of his patients who is actually bothered by the pricks at all (I also cry when I get my blood drawn). Once the needles are placed, it's basically a medically sanctioned excuse to nap.

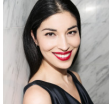
A good acupuncturist can be your best friend, your therapist, and your doctor all in one. He knows what's going on in your love life and how many glasses of Malbec you drank last night. He's also taken your full medical history. Even now that my allergies are under control, I continue to go back to relieve stress and anxiety. It's an evolving process.


Acupuncture works for a whole host of other problems as well—back pain, migraines, stress, insomnia, immune deficiencies and inflammation, to name a few. The healing powers, originally developed by ancient Chinese medicine, are linked to the flow of Qi, or energy, throughout the body. By stimulating certain points on the skin, it's believed that you can manipulate that energy to heal.

Whether you believe that or not, scientific studies have confirmed that acu-points on the body can indeed send signals to other parts of the body and the brain. For example, when I have a stuffy nose, Paul puts a needle in the heel of my hand because that point corresponds to the lungs. When I am feeling nervous or stressed, he puts one in my foot, which signals the brain to be grounded and calm.

Plus there's the whole inner health equals outer beauty thing—my resulting shiny hair and breakout-free skin are an added perk. Paul tells me you can even get an acupuncture facelift. It involves a series of treatments where your doctor places tons of tiny needles all over your face to stimulate the nerves and increase the skin's elasticity. He swears it works better than a scalpel but also refuses to let me try it (maybe when I'm 45, he says). And if Paul's methods have taught me anything, I'm certainly willing to wait.

 Eyebrows

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