

ELBOW PAIN

Oriental Medicine states that disorders of the elbow are caused by trauma, external pathogenic factors, and by overuse. A weakness of Qi in the body can lead to malnourishment of the tendons and elbow pain. Local disorders are fairly easy to identify and can be effectively treated with the use of acupuncture.

Oriental and Biomedical disorders of the elbow are mainly arthritic or involve the bursae around the elbow. Some causes of pain and disorders of the elbow include:

- ◆ Capsular Pattern
- ◆ Proximal Radioulnar Joint Laxity
- ◆ Dysfunction of the Radial Head and the Capitulum
- ◆ Pulled Elbow (pediatric patients)
- ◆ Pushed Elbow
- ◆ Ulnar Olecranon Block
- ◆ Loose Body
- ◆ Bursitis
- ◆ Tennis Elbow
- ◆ Golfer's Elbow
- ◆ Triceps Tendinitis
- ◆ Supinator Brevis Tendinitis
- ◆ Pronator Teres Tendinitis

Specialized Treatment Techniques for Elbow Pain

The Acupuncture Clinic specializes in the effective treatment of tennis elbow and compares favorably to cortisone injections. Tennis elbow is due to an inflammation of the wrist or finger extensor muscles, and an inflammation of the tendons attached to the lateral side of the elbow. This often arises from repetitive motion or acute trauma. Tennis elbow occurs equally in men and women and is found in baseball players, swimmers, carpenters, plumbers, meat cutters, musicians, or anyone who repeats an arm motion over and over. Lesions can occur in six locations from tennis elbow, ranging from fairly rare locations on the tendon body to the most common type of lesion at the junction of the extensor and the anterior aspect of the lateral epicondyle. Treatment of tennis elbow includes treatment of the cervical spine and wrist joints, cross-fiber massage with mobilization, and needling trigger points.

Golfer's elbow is a disorder that is much less common than tennis elbow and usually causes less disability. It is a cause of elbow pain that is effectively managed with specialized acupuncture treatment. Golfer's elbow is seen in patients with painful resisted flexion of the wrist. Lesions can occur in two locations: the tenoperiosteal junction and the musculotendinous junction. Both varieties are treated with cross-fiber massage and needling of the flexor muscles and trigger points, as well as with topical herbal applications.

Bursitis is another disorder of the elbow that is effectively treated through specialized acupuncture application. It is often mistaken for tennis elbow because it can cause a vague ache in the lateral elbow. Bursitis can occur with repetitive pressure, a fall on a bent elbow, or rheumatic disease. Bursitis can be treated with topical herbal medicines, by needling ear points, as well as needling other points.

Other Treatment Techniques

- ◆ Ear Acupuncture
- ◆ Distal Point Therapy – allows mobilization and manual therapy to be performed at the same time and is performed away from the point of injury or pain
- ◆ Local Point Therapy – stimulates a point near the affected area for a short period of time and may prevent flare-up
- ◆ Chinese Herbal Medicine – various Chinese Medicines used either topically or taken orally to regulate and ease elbow pain

Results of Acupuncture Treatment

Acupuncture treatment is effective for long-term relief of elbow pain. Our patients have experienced significantly decreased levels of pain, fewer episodes of sleep disturbance due to pain, improved activity levels, and they have experienced a decrease in the number of pills they take.

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