FAQ for scalp acupuncture

**How is Scalp acupuncture different from the classical acupuncture points on the head?**

Scalp acupuncture is a contemporary acupuncture method.  While it has a close connection with fundamental theories of Traditional Chinese Medicine, its clinical application is based on the modern knowledge of Western biomedical anatomy and physiology of the brain.

**Is this a style of acupuncture that you created?**

We are grateful to have received our professional training directly from Jiao Shun-fa, the founder of Chinese scalp acupuncture, and Sun Shen-tian and Yu Zhi-shun, the famous professors of the research and development of scalp acupuncture.  Our contributions to the field include expanding treatment protocols for many nervous system disorders including multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, cerebral palsy, phantom pains, residual limb pain, RLS and complex regional pain.

**How does scalp acupuncture work?**

Through the central nervous and endocrine systems, the structural, metabolic, hormonal and energetic functions of the brain are accessible at specific areas of the scalp surface.  By stimulating these reflex areas within the scalp, through special manipulation, we can regulate and harmonize the functional activities of the brain and body.

**How many treatments should I expect before I see results?**

Most patients are responsive to the initial treatment and show some improvement with the first session or at least within three treatments.  In our practice, about 80% of our patients have a good response and even major improvement early on.  The likelihood of experiencing a positive response following the initial treatment is dependent on the nature and duration of the disease, the patient’s constitutional condition, and his/her motivation to improve.

A therapeutic course of treatment consists of 10 treatments at intervals between visits of from 5 to 7 days.

**What can I expect to experience during and after a scalp acupuncture treatment?**

During or after scalp acupuncture, you may occasionally experience some sensations in the affected part of the body.  You may also feel heaviness, electrical sensation, a sensation of water or energy moving.  It is a good prognostic sign if you do feel something during stimulation; however, it is not necessary for recovery.

Most patients do not experience abnormal feeling at the conclusion of their treatment.  However, it is recommended that you rest in the clinic for about 10-30 minutes if you feel at all lightheaded or disoriented.

**How long is each treatment?**

Most treatments last 30-45 minutes.  The needles are stimulated for approximately 2-3 minutes and re-stimulated at 10 minute intervals over the course of treatment.

**Do you use special needles for scalp acupuncture?**

The needles we use are no different from acupuncture needles used by any qualified, licensed acupuncturist.  We use sterile, stainless steel, single-use only needles that range in length from 1 to 1.5 inches.

**How deep are the needles inserted?**

Once we have quickly entered the loose tissue layer of the scalp we will thread the needle for the entire 1-1.5 of the needle shaft.  This ensures proper stimulation of the underlying area we are targeting.

**Does it hurt?**

For experienced practitioners needle insertion is quick and painless.

**Do you use different needles for children?**

Yes.  The gauges of the needles we use in the clinic vary from as large as #32 (.25mm) to as thin as #36 (.20mm).  With children we always use our thinnest and shortest needles.

**How safe is scalp acupuncture?**

Acupuncture in the scalp is very safe when performed by a qualified professional.  Though the scalp is uniquely innervated and highly vascularized there is no risk of heavy bleeding.  We use sterile, single-use needles and always follow antiseptic protocols so there is limited risk of infection.

**How long should we wait following a stroke before scheduling an appointment?**

Whether it is an ischemic (clot) or a hemorrhagic (bleed inside the brain), the sooner you begin treatment following the acute stage the better we can minimize the extent of residual damage and promote recovery.

**When is scalp acupuncture not recommended?**

Scalp acupuncture is contraindicated for those with very high blood pressure (220/120), heart disease, infection and post-operative scars in the acupuncture area, some cases of pregnancy (mainly habitual miscarriage), persons who are extremely nervous, and infants whose fontanels have not closed.

**I’m coming from out of state, how many days of treatment should I prepare for?**

Most people visiting from out of state will schedule 1-2 weeks of continuous treatments.  These sessions will be divided between our Albuquerque and Santa Fe clinics.

**How can I learn more about this special technique?**

If you would like to learn more about scalp acupuncture and how it can benefit you can purchase our book Chinese Scalp Acupuncture, published by Blue Poppy Press.