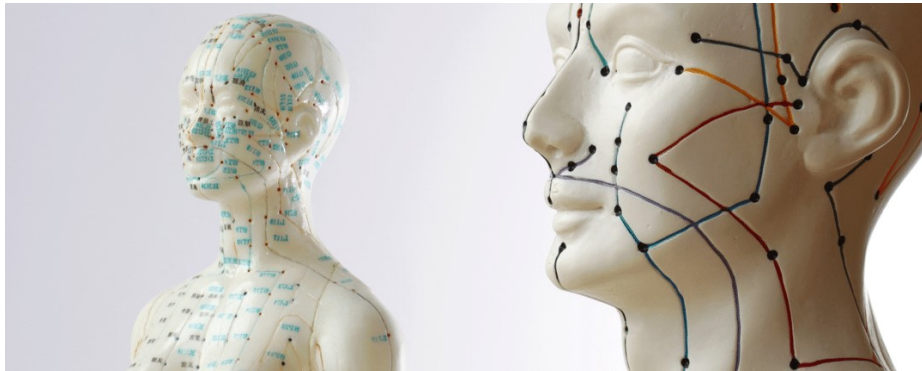


# Getting to the point

## Tips on how to choose an acupuncturist



Choosing an acupuncturist, or any healthcare provider, is an important part of your healing and wellness process. It's all too often that we are quick to trust "the expert" more than we trust ourselves, especially when it comes to our health. A good acupuncturist is looking to empower you to take ownership of your own recovery. The relationship you have with your practitioner is really important so we have written some tips to help you choose the right person for you!

Whether it's an acupuncturist, a massage therapist, a chiropractor or any other practitioner, here are some things we think will help you feel confident in selecting the right practitioner **and specifically a good acupuncturist!**

### Qualifications and regulations

Chinese medicine practitioners like acupuncturists are not regulated by the British Acupuncture Council, which means, in theory, anyone is free to practice. In practical terms however, all acupuncture practitioners are required to register with their local authorities as skin piercers!



BACc Member  
[www.acupuncture.org.uk](http://www.acupuncture.org.uk)

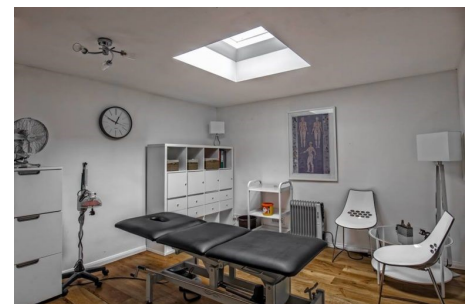
Despite this lax regulation, any practitioner who is registered under the BACc has gone through the right channels for being fully trained and qualified. At Durham House we only have acupuncturists who are registered. Always ask whomever you see to provide training and certification proofs.

### Insurance

Chinese medicine practitioners who practice acupuncture pay some of the lowest malpractice insurance premiums in the country amongst healthcare providers. This is because of the low occurrence of injuries or harm incurred by patients from acupuncture. Whilst they can choose not to carry this insurance, it is a benefit for both parties, patient and practitioner alike, for a practitioner to carry malpractice insurance.

### Clean, safe treatment room

In the UK, acupuncturists are mandated to use sterile one time use needles, so this should always be used. The treatment room should be clean, with a properly covered and / or cleaned treatment table, including any pillows. Standard medical cleanliness practices apply: clean hands, no dirty grimy rooms, no vomit or blood on surfaces, no strewn needles and sharps containers for used needles and biohazard collection when needed.



### Time

In our rush rush world, it's hard to have quality time with someone where your health is concerned. With your acupuncturist, your visit will likely be about 1 hour in length. At first your practitioner will spend more time talking with you. They will also help identify practices and actions for optimum self care. You might have needles in for just a few minutes or for quite a while and your practitioner may or may not stay in the room with you. You shouldn't feel rushed by your acupuncturist - show up on time and make the most of your appointment. That time is held for you.

### Honesty

Healing takes time and patience is necessary. If you've been in pain for a while, it's likely going to take some time before things improve. If your practitioner thinks you need additional support from another practitioner or modality, they should make the appropriate recommendation.

# Getting to the point

## Looking after the whole of you



### Holistic

Chinese medicine is probably the most holistic of all the complimentary treatments. You're observed and studied as a whole person. All of you matters - your symptoms from head to toe; your lifestyle, your career, your relationships - all of it. If you're seeing an acupuncturist and they're not interested in more than one symptom, we'd be a bit wary.

### Better wellness and self care

Your wellbeing and the state of your health are actually as unique to you as snowflakes are from one another. In order for us to get you moving to wellness, it's going to require self care. Acupuncturists are going to look at everything from sleep, diet and exercise, to how much fun you're having and more. They'll make recommendations for you to take action on what they anticipate will help you, based on what's happening with your unique symptoms, circumstances and what they find from their examinations. Humans aren't machines made of replaceable parts: we get one body in this life and you play the starring role in your wellness journey.

### You take responsibility for your wellness

You are your own best expert, hence a good acupuncturist will not be taking responsibility for how well you get. It's hard sometimes as they're invested in your wellbeing and usually care deeply. They can't fix you though - they can partner with you to uncover the mysteries about your illness and pain, or to make the most of aggravating circumstances. They can and will use medicine to help you and encourage optimum healing.

### Fib detectors

Healthcare practitioners have got to have a good fib radar so they can help you get moving on getting well! Sometimes patients fib on purpose because they think they'll be punished or embarrassed for sharing with us that they didn't get any more sleep, smoked a bunch of cigarettes or ate fast food 3 times a day for a week. Other times patients don't even realise they're fibbing. It could be that they've been fibbing for so long they don't even realise it, like when your practitioner asks, "how are you?" and you say, "fine" instead of "I've had the worst 10 years of my life". Other times these fibs occur because it's easier to stuff things away than deal with any pain and suffering. Your acupuncturist is not there to judge - really. They want you to feel safe telling them what's true about your life as this will help them help you better. So they may call you out on something, respectfully, if they think it's going to help your healing process.



### Listening

Your acupuncturist is not just listening to your symptoms. They're listening deeply for what you're sharing, what you're not sharing and how you sound when you talk about it all. They're listening so that they can hear for what's underneath your symptoms or disease process. They do this with their ears as you speak, their eyes when they see you and look at your tongue and their hands when they feel your pulses or your acupuncture points. They're listening for opportunities to ask you important questions that will help you illuminate some of the roots of the imbalance

### Questions

Acupuncturists are going to ask you many things about yourself and your whole life. Some of the questions may even sound strange to you. You might wonder why they're asking you how you express your creativity when you talk about your migraines. Trust them. It could have everything to do with those pesky and devastating headaches! You're a whole person so your acupuncturist needs to look at the whole you to figure out how to help. Whether they ask you about your bowels or your love life, roll with it and participate - they're asking so they can help you and to determine an appropriate treatment plan.

### Answers

It's not one sided! Your acupuncturist should be patient and available to answer questions you have too. You should feel comfortable asking about anything from their training, safety practices, how acupuncture works and why they're putting a needle near your elbow and even for tips about how to help yourself better.