

**Nawei's Acupuncture Clinic
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Weight control with Traditional Chinese Medicine or Acupuncture

By Dr. Nawei Jiang

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Weight loss comes under the topic of "Weight Control", because we are concerned with the loss and MAINTENANCE of loss of weight. This is a multi-faceted problem, and a good program involves diet, exercise and stress reduction techniques. Chinese acupuncture and digestive aid exercises are also useful tools in the battle with weight loss.

Acupuncture is an ADJUNCT therapy. It is not a panacea or a wonder cure in the treatment of weight control. But, acupuncture is effective in making it EASIER to lose and maintain that loss if the patient is willing to change their lifestyle. Acupuncture needles inserted into specific points on the body and in the ear release endorphins which have a calming and relaxing effect that makes it easier to deal with stress, frustration and anxiety that can trigger overeating and bingeing on fattening foods. Also endorphins affect the digestive and hormonal systems so acupuncture can help rebalance the organ systems that are running too fast- or in this case too slow—i.e., the metabolism and the will power.

The Acupuncture Treatment

In order for the acupuncturist to choose the correct points for you, you must first come in for a consultation to discuss your particular pattern of overeating, and let the practitioner know in your intake form if there are any real digestive difficulties.

The Treatment Plan

The number of acupuncture treatments necessary depends on the patient's goals for losing weight, the speed at which they want to lose, and their commitment to keeping the weight off. If the overeating is severe, a treatment every day for the first five days is appropriate and can then taper off the second week to every other day and the third week to every three days. For the average patient who wants to lose between five to ten pounds, one treatment every three days or twice a week until they reach their goal is appropriate, and then a booster treatment once every two weeks is optimal. After a few booster treatments, the patient and practitioner will mutually decide when to terminate frequent treatments and then can aim to meet approximately four times a year at the change of seasons when energy levels are unstable and tonification and harmonizing of one's system is appropriate for everyone.

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Nutritional Counseling and Lifestyle Changes

A good weight loss program includes nutritional counseling and exercise as well as a commitment to make permanent lifestyle changes. The acupuncturist can help with nutritional counseling and can discuss a diet regimen that the patient can live with and maintain for the long term. A diet that is high in fiber and low in fat, with moderate amounts of low-density carbohydrates and low-fat protein is usually the best choice to adopt. With this type of a diet program, the patient can avoid the pit-falls of yo-yo dieting or the tendency to lose weight and then regain it.

Other important tools that can aid in weight loss are stress reduction techniques and a moderate exercise regimen. The acupuncturist can suggest various stress reduction methods that may include breathing exercises, Tai Chi, yoga, meditation or biofeedback. And since the goal of a weight program is not only weight loss but the maintenance of that loss, an exercise program that the patient likes is the best one to choose. The patient could try starting a program that includes brisk walking three times a week for forty minutes. After a few weeks when stamina is increased, they could try walking five times a week. After that more aerobic exercise can be added such as the treadmill, stair climber or aerobics classes, cycling or whatever form of rigorous exercise the person enjoys and can maintain for the long term. It is a good idea to use free weights beginning with three pound weights and practicing just two to three sets of arm curls three times a week. Moderate weight training builds lean body mass and helps to reduce body fat as well as strengthen and build bone mass and reduce the risk of osteoporosis.