

# Drs. Oz & Roizen: Amazing acupuncture

Published by [The Windsor Star](#) on Sep 17, 2014 <http://bit.ly/Xu37Th>



Acupuncture can help with a number of health issues, including stress relief and providing an energy boost for cancer patients. (DAN JANISSE / Windsor Star files)

You may not like the idea of being needled, but acupuncture has been a go-to therapy for 5,000 years.

And this Chinese healing art, which uses hair-thin needles to stimulate points in the body that affect chi or qi, the life energy, has been in the news lately — not just because celebs like pop star Alicia Keys and bike racer Vincenzo Nibali (winner of the 2014 Tour de France) use it to stay energized, but because modern medicine is discovering more and more about the powers of acupuncture to heal the mind and body.



Dr. Michael Roizen & Dr. Mehmet Oz

The World Health Organization says acupuncture may help ease digestive problems like constipation and diarrhea; chronic sinus and lung infections; all sorts of pain, from headaches and migraines to neck pain, back pain and osteoarthritis; infertility; and even urinary and menstrual problems. At the Cleveland Clinic, where Dr. Mike is chief wellness officer and there are more than 10 certified acupuncture practitioners in the Wellness Institute's Center for Integrative Medicine, a review of the best research found good evidence that it works to

ease gastro esophageal reflux, nerve pain and post-surgery pain.

No wonder the number of North Americans being needled jumped from two million in 2002 to more than 14 million in 2007. And now at least four U.S. states include health-insurance coverage for acupuncture under the Affordable Care Act, and people in many more have plans that do the same.

So, if you're one of the folks who like the idea, and the treatments work for you, here are some recent insights into what acupuncture can do for you:

**Acupuncture is a stress reliever:** Levels of neuropeptide Y — a combo of 36 amino acids that acts as a neurotransmitter and constricts blood vessels — skyrockets when you're tense, triggering the fight-or-flight response. Acupuncture helps control levels of neuropeptide Y, lowering blood pressure and relaxing muscles.

**It's a pain soother:** In a new University of California San Diego study, after 31 kids (ages 2 to 17) had tonsillectomies, acupuncture muted their throat aches within minutes.

**A hot-flash cooler:** A new review of 12 studies involving 869 menopausal women concludes that acupuncture reduces the number and intensity of this annoying menopause symptom.

**A pound melter:** When 91 overweight people followed the same healthy diet and got real or sham ear acupuncture, those who got the real thing lost weight.

**An energizer for cancer patients:** In two recent University of Pennsylvania studies, women receiving chemotherapy for early-stage breast cancer reported reductions in tiredness, anxiety, depression and joint pain after receiving acupuncture.

We know that in some studies, sham acupuncture produces results almost as good (or as good) as the real thing. Perhaps the sham technique (pricking acupuncture points) works as well as inserting needles ... or, in some cases, acupuncture works because people want it to. Future research will help sort that out. What we know for sure? Here's how to get the most out of this healing therapy:

**Talk with your doctor first:** Don't stop medications or other treatments on your own. Instead, ask your doctor about combining the two.

**Check your insurance:** Some plans cover it; others may offer a discount if you use certain providers. If you have a health spending account, you'll probably be able to use it for acupuncture, too.

**Find a certified practitioner:** To find a registered acupuncturist in Ontario, visit <http://tcmpao.asicanada.net/imis15/registry>

**Know what to expect:** Needles are thin, sharp and sterile — only disposable, prepackaged needles should be used. You may feel a twinge or nothing at all when they're inserted. Depending on your health, you may need one to 10 treatments or visits that continue for several months. We hope you get the point!

Mehmet Oz, MD is host of The Dr. Oz Show, and Mike Roizen, MD is chief wellness officer and chair of Wellness Institute at Cleveland Clinic. To live your healthiest, tune into The Dr. Oz Show or visit [sharecare.com](http://sharecare.com).