

# Acupuncture Eases COPD - New Research

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Acupuncture is an effective treatment modality for COPD, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. New research examined multifaceted approaches to clinical assessments and treatments and discovered that acupuncture reduces dyspnea, difficulty with breathing, and increases exercise capacity for patients with COPD. Acupuncture also showed demonstrative improvements in quality of life scales and overall pulmonary function.

A total of nine clinical trials were reviewed in the meta-analysis of acupuncture for the treatment of COPD. Two of the trials used electroacupuncture and seven of the trials used manual acupuncture needle stimulation. The results showed improvements for patients with COPD and the investigators recommend additional research based on these findings.

There have been several new studies showing similar results since the very first placebo controlled, randomized study was published last year in the Archives of Internal Medicine. That groundbreaking study concluded “that acupuncture is a useful adjunctive therapy in reducing” breathlessness in patients with COPD. That study showed acupuncture improving exercise capabilities, arterial blood gas, rib cage motion, respiratory function including forced vital capacity and respiratory muscle strength. Acupuncture also demonstrated a significant positive impact on the activities of daily living score. Additionally, acupuncture improved the body mass index and pre-albumin levels of patients with COPD.

Classic acupuncture points were used in this very first placebo controlled study. Manual stimulation at each needle for 3-5 minutes was performed until a de qi sensation arrived. The acupuncture points in the study were: LU1 (Zhongfu), LU9 (Taiyuan), LI18 (Futu), CV4 (Guanyuan), CV12 (Zhongwan), ST36 (Zusanli), KI3 (Taixi), GB12 (Wangu), UB13 (Feishu), UB20 (Pishu), UB23 (Shenshu). The researchers note, “We demonstrated clinically relevant improvements in DOE (dyspnea on exertion) (Borg scale), nutrition status (including BMI), airflow obstruction, exercise capacity, and health-related quality of life after 3 months of acupuncture treatment.”

Mounting scientific based evidence now supports acupuncture for the treatment of COPD. The new research is helpful in quantifying the benefits of acupuncture for COPD patients and for setting realistic expectations regarding clinical improvements.

**References:**

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