

## smoking cessation

The importance to health of stopping smoking is generally accepted. Many smokers are able to stop quite easily, but there are many others who have great difficulty although they are well motivated. There are various methods to help people give up smoking, but acupuncture therapy is relatively simple, economic and convenient.

Acupuncture, particularly ear or 'auricular acupuncture', will help reduce the cravings for nicotine by stimulating receptors in our brains that nicotine usually binds to and create a break from the cravings. Acupuncture involves the insertion of very fine needles into certain points on the body. These needles stimulate the flow of qi (chee) energy throughout the body, helping to regulate the body's natural systems. Many people are afraid of needles but acupuncture needles are extremely thin—usually the thickness of a strand of hair—and the insertion is barely noticed. The needles are inserted very superficially in the skin and retained in the body while the patient rests. Acupuncture works by helping to regulate the body's natural energy flow, to reduce the cravings of nicotine withdrawal, to calm the mind and ease anxieties, and to strengthen and benefit the lungs and clear phlegm, tar and nicotine residue out of the lungs.

Often people smoke to deal with stuck energy in the body that shows itself as feelings of anxiety, tension, anger or grief. Smoking a cigarette draws warm air deeply into the lungs and the nicotine hits our blood stream, then works its way into our brain allowing us to momentarily feel relaxation and release from these emotions. Acupuncture helps by regulating this stuck energy and moving it along in the same way that deep breaths or a few moments of quiet meditation will do.