

knocking out headache pain

by *sheri kightlinger*

acupuncture
helps
migraine
sufferers
manage
their pain

When a friend described the long-lasting results from acupuncture on a knee injury, Tammi Hanson was intrigued and needed to know more. Motivated by frequent, debilitating headaches that lasted for days, she began her research. Her findings led her to Euclid Hospital's Pain Management Center and acupuncturist Timothy Rhudy.

Today, Hanson is thrilled with her outcome. Acupuncture worked quickly for her and has significantly helped her manage her headaches. As a mother of two children, she cannot afford to be sidelined. "I could never plan anything because I never knew when I was going to be functional," Hanson says. "Now I can participate whenever."

* 'nothing to lose'

When her headaches began more than two years ago, Hanson immediately went to her primary

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care physician, who sent her to a neurologist. After a CT scan and an MRI, she learned she had two herniated discs in her neck as well as the migraine headaches.

"I was on so many medications with all of the side effects and still was having incapacitating headaches. I had visited headache specialists, went to a migraine center, and also was seen by an orthopaedic surgeon who recommended a spinal block. After researching the similarities of a spinal block to acupuncture, that's when I seriously considered it," Hanson explains. "I felt

that compared with a spinal block, acupuncture was noninvasive, and I had nothing to lose.”

Rhudy, a licensed acupuncturist, is very pleased with his patient’s outcome. “The type of acupuncture that I practice is called Acupuncture Physical Medicine (APM), and it is highly effective at releasing myofascial ‘holding patterns.’”

The word “myofascial” is a combination of two Latin words, “myo” for muscle and “fascia” for band. The fascia becomes tightened, or constricted, due to injuries, stress, trauma or poor posture. This restriction or tightness to the fascia can spread to other places in the body and create “holding patterns” that need to be unblocked. If the constricted muscles, or structure, are restored to resting length, then function should improve.

* a relaxing treatment

“In Mrs. Hanson’s case, we have been very successful at managing her pain,” Rhudy explains. She had surgery on her herniated discs this past year and was able to resume acupuncture shortly thereafter.

The needles used by licensed acupuncturists in the U.S. are very fine, stainless steel, sterile and disposable. Hanson has been receiving acupuncture for more than a year now. In describing how the needles feel, she says, “Sometimes I do not even feel it. Other times it is like your muscles are twitching. It’s very relaxing.”

Rhudy agrees. “Many of my patients become very restful. The needles stay in up to 20 minutes and occasionally I hear them snoring on the table. Ideally, during the treatment time, the body is switching from a fight-or-flight disposition to rest and digest.”

Hanson has learned that while her headaches are caused by a variety of factors including her neck, hormones and muscular tension, stress is

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free




a definite trigger. “I like Euclid Hospital,” she says. “Even though I live on the West side, it is a very easy commute. I can park for free; everything is easy to find; and Tim Rhudy and the staff have been extremely pleasant. My trips to Euclid are low-stress, and that’s exactly what I need.”

* an effective complement

Steeped in ancient Chinese culture for thousands of years, acupuncture is a relatively new therapy in the U.S. It has proven to be an effective, safe therapy for chronic pain, chronic fatigue and other stress disorders. It also is an effective complement in the medical care of myofascial and neurological pain, headaches, chronic fatigue, gastrointestinal, gynecological and respiratory disorders, to name a few. Acupuncture has been offered by Euclid Hospital for the past several years.

“We are focused on providing patients with comprehensive care to effectively manage their pain, not just singular treatments,” explains Euclid Hospital Pain Management Medical Director Samuel Samuel, M.D. “Acupuncture has been very effective at helping our patients have good responses with long-term results, and without the use of drugs or any major side effects.”

“I plan to keep acupuncture in mind for other medical conditions. I hope that others will become aware of its usefulness,” Hanson says. “It can help them to enjoy better health.” 



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