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Acupuncture Weight Loss with 5 Step Plan

By Brian B. Carter, MS, LAc

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I remember back in my senior year of high school – my best friend since 5th grade was living in France. He wrote that they didn't like Americans much. "They think we're all fat," he said. With his own skinny frame, of course, he confounded their belief.

But, he added a funny, or perhaps ironic capstone to the issue. "I went to a store, and they were selling statues of these fat people, and, at the base of each one was written, 'American.'"

Obesity is not only an American problem. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), it's a global problem. They call it globesity. Paradoxically, their understanding of this problem began with their original mission to eliminate hunger and malnutrition. We live in a world where many have nothing to eat, and many eat too much. From 1995 to 2000, the number of obese adults worldwide mushroomed from 200 million to 300 million. That's a 50% increase in just 5 years!

What is Obesity, and What is Overweight?

Overweight means an excess of body weight. This excess weight may be muscle, bone, fat, and/or body water. Obesity refers specifically to an abnormally high proportion of body fat. You can be overweight without being obese – for example, a bodybuilder or other highly-muscled athlete. But many people who are overweight are also obese. The main way to determine whether you are overweight or obese is with the body mass index (BMI). It doesn't directly measure body fat, and it's not gender specific, but it does give you a pretty reliable estimation.

To find your BMI, divide your weight (in kilograms) by your height in meters squared. Yep, for the math-challenged, that's complex, so I'll give you a website that will figure it out for you, the National Institute's of Health BMI calculator (<http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/>). This will very quickly tell you if you are normal, overweight, or obese, and it does all the calculating and metric conversions for you!

Overweight is defined as a BMI above 25 (including those above 30 BMI, too), and obese is a BMI above 30. So, all obese people are overweight, but not all overweight people are obese.

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The Obesity Epidemic

Obesity isn't just about not feeling good or having trouble getting dates...

It leads to more than 300,000 premature deaths each year in the United States. 90,000 are preventable cancer deaths. (CDC)

Severely obese men die 13 years sooner than men of normal weight (JAMA).

As a killer in America, obesity is second only to tobacco. (CDC)

The Weight Loss Industry

Spending: Americans spend between \$40–50 billion per year to lose weight.

Results: I haven't seen any recent news that Americans are getting any thinner – have you?

Conclusion: What people are doing isn't working. If we want different results, we have to try a different solution.

Acupuncture Weight Loss: Fantasy, or Fact?

Fantasy or Fact? As a well-trained and fairly conservative Chinese medicine practitioner, I had assumed that acupuncture for weight loss was a marketing fad and a patient fantasy.

Evidence: But while researching my upcoming book *Chinese Medicine: A Practical Guide to Optimal Healing*, I found some surprisingly positive information that changed my mind.

Chinese Medicine's Collective Clinical Data on Acupuncture Weight Loss

Chinese Medicine has thousands of years of clinical experience. This collective data not as convincing as randomized controlled trials are, but it does contain truth – it's imperfect but still valid and important.

A U.S. government study in the 80's concluded that 85% of western medicine is based on clinical experience, not on research. (Office of Technology Assessment of the Congress of the United States, *The Impact of Randomized Controlled Trials on Health Policy and Medical Practice*, Background Paper OTA–BP–H–22. Also see Michael Millenson's book, *Demanding Medical Excellence*)

There is good Chinese Medicine research in Taiwan, Australia, and Europe that gets ignored by American scientists and media. Much research in Chinese has not even been translated into English.

Seven Studies of Acupuncture for Weight Loss

How it works: By enhancing the function of two neuroendocrine pathways that regulate many bodily processes, including metabolism.

What it does:

- * Lowers body weight, body fat, insulin levels, and lipid levels in the blood
- * Decreases excessive appetite and makes it easier to satisfy your hunger with less food.

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* Decreases menopausal weight gain

In one study, acupuncture took off 10 pounds in 2 months – that translates to 60 lbs in a year!

* Combined with diet control, and aerobic counseling it not only takes off the pounds and body fat, but keeps them off, especially if you're diligent with their exercise.

(See references at end of article for the research)

Ephedra misuse and mislegislation

Ephedra is a Chinese herb for colds and coughs. It has been misused to increase metabolism, and this misuse has caused numerous deaths. As a result, the FDA is considering a total ban on ephedra products. We can blame two major things:

Supplement companies that care more about your money than your health (no, not all of them are that way, but some of them are, especially the ones that market weight loss formulations).

The idea that you can medicate yourself safely with herbs – self-medication of any kind is risky. Self-medication with herbs is off the radar, and people generally think they can do it safely. The ephedra debacle is an example of how dangerous it can be.

Traditionally, Chinese herbs are given in formulas (not singly), which is safer and more personalized. They're prescribed by a Chinese medicine practitioner who diagnoses your specific imbalances first. Ephedra would never be given for weight loss, but only for certain kinds of colds and coughs, and only to people whose body's can handle it.

No traditional Chinese herbs should be outlawed without allowing Chinese medical practitioners to continue to use them traditionally.

Food Cravings

Problem #1 (Enzyme Deficiency): The foods you crave depending on your personal imbalances. Modern digestive science explains that when your body can't digest a food, you crave more of it – you're not getting what you need from it. This lead to a cycle of craving and overeating the exact food you can't digest.

Problem #2 (Low Blood Sugar): Another vicious cycle happens when you can't digest complex carbs, so your blood sugar is low, so you eat simple carbs that raise your blood sugar which raises insulin, which lowers your blood sugar again, and your stuck eating donuts and feeling horrible.

Solution: Enzymes (I recommend various enzyme formulations from a company called Transformations) and Chinese herbal formulas can help you digest your food and break both of these cycles

Weight can be lost safely if done slowly and naturally. You can lose up to 2 lbs per week without gaining it back. That means you could lose 104 lbs this year and keep it off!

Positive change is like stretching a rubber band– if you stretch too far too fast, it breaks or snaps back

on you.

So avoid the temptation to take an easy solution like ephedra or citrus aurantium (both misused Chinese herbs), because you'll gain the weight back, and you're risking heart problems and stroke.

5 Things to Do Right Now To Lose 10 Pounds Within 2 Months And Keep Them Off:

1. Avoid heavily marketed supplements – instead, see a professional trained herbalist (acupuncturist) – it's safer and more effective – my preference would be a Chinese medicine practitioner, but some very well-educated western herbalists are good too.
2. Acupuncture Weight Loss: See an acupuncturist/chinese herbalist – Get acupuncture (once to three times per week) to SAFELY regulate your metabolism and hunger–satisfaction. Your acupuncturist can also get you the herbs that will balance your digestion and cravings – and based on your Chinese pattern diagnosis, they can also give you personalized diet advice. Herbs and enzymes (specific formulations from the enzyme company, Transformations) can eliminate your food cravings.
3. Develop a plan and goals with your acupuncturist and aerobics instructor– make it realistic, and stick to it. If you mess up, don't beat yourself up, just get back on track as soon as you can. Any progress is better than none at all.
4. Eat less, exercise more – Eat a low fat diet, and don't miss breakfast! Weigh yourself regularly, and exercise an hour a day. Start by walking a few minutes each day, or take the stairs at work. Don't

overdo it! Remember the rubber band. In fact, you may want to wear a rubber band on your wrist to remind yourself to make changes slowly. Get some aerobic exercise help– a public class, or private aerobic counseling.

5. Join a support group like Weight Watchers or Overeaters Anonymous. There's nothing like positive friends to encourage you and keep you on track. OA members say that this spiritual program of action has changed the way they relate to food.

References and Resources

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Studies of the Weight Loss Industry

Obesity prevalence and effect

Overeaters Anonymous

Acupuncturist, herbalist, and medical professor Brian B. Carter founded the alternative health megasite *The Pulse of Oriental Medicine* (<http://www.PulseMed.org/>). He is the author of the book "Powerful Body, Peaceful Mind: How to Heal Yourself with Foods, Herbs, and Acupressure" (November, 2004). Brian speaks on radio across the country, and has been quoted and interviewed by *Real Simple*, *Glamour*, and *ESPN* magazines.

Can Needles Really Manage Your Weight?

By Ng Peng Hock

Over weight or obesity is identified as one of the risk factors for heart disease. As such, many forms of weight loss or weight management have been put into the market to help people who are over weight or obese, and those who wish to maintain good body shapes. Recently, a new way of weight loss solution has become popular using needles. What is this? Another sales gimmick? Not really! It is a technique used by TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) practitioners known as "Acupuncture". The needles used are not ordinary ones: they are very thin needles specially made of various sizes just for the purpose of acupuncture. These needles are termed as acupuncture needles. Reports showed that there are people, who have tried every possible means to trim themselves down but in vain, can finally stay away from the circle of obesity with the help of this kind of treatment.

Acupuncture, an ancient method of Chinese traditional treatment, uses needles to pierce specific sites of the body called "pathways" or "meridians", in an attempt to relieve pain associated with some chronic disorders. It can effectively relieve nausea, stress, arthritis pain in the knee, and many more. A recent research done by Dr Hans–Christoph Diener, a neurologist at the University of Duisburg–Essen in Germany, confirmed that traditional Chinese acupuncture is as effective as drug treatment for migraine.

To facilitate weight loss, acupuncture needles are inserted into various parts of body to make a person feel full, as if he or she has just eaten. According to TCM practitioners, acupuncture does stimulate one's metabolic rate enabling the body to utilize food efficiently instead of storing it as fat. Acupuncture also helps to combat weight by stimulating the production of endorphins which could lower body fat, insulin levels and lipid levels in the blood. Endorphins are natural chemical released by the body to decrease the sensation of pain and help control a person's breathing and digestion.

Is this method of weight loss suitable for all people? The answer is probably no. Why? As one reputable TCM practitioner pointed out, this method is only appropriate for people with no prior medical ailment, and those who eat right and exercise regularly but cannot achieve ideal weights. For people

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who have no self control, eating whatever they like but seek physician only to lose weight through acupuncture, this is certainly not going to work for them in the long run.

Ask yourself this question before you go even if you satisfy the above criteria: can I bear the pain caused by piercing of so many needles into my body? If your answer is no, then you better turn to other forms of weight management program.

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Heart Disease Prevention – 8 Simple Ways You Can Do Immediately, Goto:



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