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### Boost Your Fitness and Sports Performance

When a top athlete like Kobe Bryant tweets a picture of acupuncture needles in his leg, you know it's time to consider how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help improve your sports performance. All athletes and coaches are involved in an ongoing search for ways to improve performance and gain a competitive edge over their rivals. Many are finding that acupuncture can often provide that edge.

From moving more fluidly to recovering from an injury, acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help you to stay active, boost your fitness level, and recover more quickly. By following the principles of Oriental medicine, an acupuncture treatment can strengthen body function and restore internal harmony and balance. Professional sports teams and top athletes often have an acupuncturist on staff to treat injuries and keep them performing at their peak.

Practitioners of Oriental medicine can help athletes, even the amateur "weekend warrior," in many ways. In addition to acupuncture, tight, stiff muscles may be helped by manual techniques such as cupping, a suction-based massage, and Gua Sha, a Chinese form of friction massage. In 2011, researchers at the University of Duisburg-Essen found that Gua Sha was effective at treating chronic pain and muscle stiffness in the lower back. In India, researchers from Majeedia Hospital found cupping helped to reduce pain, inflammation, and muscle stiffness in patients diagnosed with knee osteoarthritis. Cupping also improved blood supply to the area and simulated light exercise, leading to increased muscle flexibility in the region, researchers explained.

Some of the best Olympic athletes incorporate acupuncture into their wellness programs. China's 7 foot 6 inch basketball center, Yao Ming, used acupuncture and Oriental medicine to help him recover after undergoing surgery on his ankle. Chinese swimmer, Wang Qun, was photographed doing some last minute training in Beijing with round marks on her back from cupping.

Call today to see how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help you meet your fitness goals and assist in recovering from an injury!

### Studies on Acupuncture to Enhance Athletic Performance

Studies have shown that acupuncture has measurable effects on the flow of blood to certain areas of the body, which could in turn boost athletic performance. One such study conducted at the Beijing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine involved athletes running 5,000 meters, and afterwards sitting for acupuncture treatments before they had a chance to catch their breath. The heart rates of the athletes who received the treatments recovered more quickly than those in the control group.

Another study published in the American Journal of Acupuncture measured the effects of acupuncture on anaerobic threshold and work capacity during exercise in healthy young males. Researchers found that individuals in the acupuncture treatment group had higher maximal exercise capacity and were able to perform higher workloads at the onset of blood lactate accumulation (OBLA) than individuals in the placebo group. The



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### Want Less Pain and a Faster Recovery?



Acupuncture is well known for its effectiveness in reducing most types of pain, including pain from sports-related injuries due to trauma or overuse syndromes involving the musculoskeletal system and its soft tissues. Trauma to these soft tissues, including ligaments, tendons and muscles are generally the result from falls, blows, sprains/strains, collisions, compressions, and disruptions of the healing process due to inflammation.

Due to its broad range of applications, acupuncture can be used during any of the phases of

individuals that received acupuncture also had lower heart rates.

Acupuncture can increase exercise capacity, according to researchers from the University of California. Study subjects biking on a test ramp were able to work harder after receiving an acupuncture treatment. Their systolic blood pressure also declined, indicating more efficient blood circulation.

Are you looking for your next "runner's high"? Scientists from the Neuroscience Research Institute in China found that acupuncture stimulates the release of endorphins, which can reduce the sensation of pain. Instead of trying to exercise and get fit with a philosophy of "no pain, no gain," you may be able to use acupuncture to experience less pain while you pursue your fitness goals.

## Injury Prevention and Healing

Don't let your pledge to get into shape be derailed by a sports injury.

Fitness clubs across the country are full of enthusiastic individuals giving it their all to get fit or drop a few pounds. Unfortunately, some of these new athletes try to do too much too quickly, and can pay a painful price.

Some sports injuries commonly treated by acupuncture and Oriental medicine include pulled muscles, neck pain, shoulder impingement, tennis elbow, lower back strain, pulled groin, hamstring strain, runner's knee, shin splints, ankle sprain, tendinitis, and foot pain.

Treatment for a sports injury with acupuncture and Oriental medicine has two objectives:

1. Reduce pain and inflammation of the injured area.

There is evidence that acupuncture can aid healing and resolution of injuries, including reducing pain, increasing local micro-circulation and attracting white blood cells to the area (both of which speed the healing rate), and aid dispersal of swelling and bruising.

2. Prevent further injuries and enhance athletic performance.

The best way to approach a fitness program without causing injury is to avoid diving in. Instead, take it slow and get the joints and muscles you haven't used in a while ready to be used again.

If you suffer a setback in your fitness routine, call for more information about treatment options

the injury healing process. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine may be used to help decrease swelling, spasms and inflammation, in addition to assisting in pain management, increasing range of motion and promoting healing. The focus is not only to treat the injury, but also to treat any underlying conditions that may predispose an individual to injuries. This is especially important when treating chronic or recurrent injuries that interfere with life activities or athletic performance.

Acupuncture helps reduce pain and enable activity for athletes experiencing Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome (PFPS), Plantar Fasciitis, ankle sprains, and soft tissue adhesions, according to the Acupuncture Research Resource Center (UK). In a study that covered a range of injuries and acupuncture techniques, researchers found that the underlying diagnostic principles of Oriental medicine could be useful for treating sports injuries.

Researchers at the University of Tokyo found that administering acupuncture above a healthy Achilles tendon led to increased blood flow and oxygen supply to the region, which indicates that this treatment could also help an injured tendon to heal.

Furthermore, athletes with chronic rotator cuff tendinitis who received acupuncture experienced significantly less pain, according to a study from the University of Heidelberg.