

## NO BACK POINTS? HOW WILL YOU TREAT MY BACK PAIN?

We are often asked the question “why don’t you put needles in my back?” The most obvious reason, in a community style clinic, is because all of your clothes stay on. Some people are under the impression that acupuncture points are picked strictly in a symptom manner... for anxiety we use this point, if there is also PMS add this point. The art of Acupuncture is considerably more exciting and complex than that!

In the community acupuncture setting the preferred approach is typically “distal treatment”, meaning we use acupuncture points that are distanced from the pain. Many patients are surprised when we put needles in their hand for knee pain or in their ankle for a stomach ache. It is much like when taking an Aspirin for a headache... it is not necessary to rub the Aspirin on your head to get the throbbing to subside because Aspirin affects your nervous system, much like acupuncture.

Medicine that works from the inside out affects the body’s nervous system. Distal treatment is easily illustrated by the use of another electrical system in our daily lives. To turn the light off in a room, you flip a light switch that may be on the opposite side of the room. Sometimes it is appropriate to use acupuncture points right where it hurts, but many times, in order to really turn the electricity off, distal points are needed. These points are the metaphorical light switches to the central nervous system and they may be on the other side of the body.

Chosen point combinations change from patient to patient, from treatment to treatment, and from one acupuncturist to another. There are many different styles of acupuncture that are practiced not because one is better, but because different practitioners use different systems, and different clinic setups have different needs.