

## AN ACUPUNCTURE-ASSISTED BIRTH STORY

Leslie Ring-Adams, R.Ac. • DTCM • Doula



Acupuncture has been used in China for over 2000 years. More recently, western medical professionals and traditional practitioners are also practicing acupuncture in North America. The medical community has come to appreciate the widespread benefits of acupuncture and its near absence of side effects.

Acupuncture is a useful treatment tool through the entire course of pregnancy. It can be used for morning sickness, edema, soft tissue problems, pain, prevention of miscarriage, and reversal of breech presentation. This ancient practice is also known to regulate hormones in the body and can increase levels of prostaglandin and oxytocin, which aid in ripening the cervix and enhancing uterine contractions. In the postpartum period, acupuncture may be used for problems with lactation, depression and regaining energy.

Acupuncture can impart a sense of control to women during their labour and delivery — something often missing when the more potent conventional analgesic techniques in today's maternity units are used. Following is an account of a recent delivery I attended.

Steve\* and Valerie\* first came to the clinic early on in the pregnancy. Valerie suffered from severe nausea and vomiting, which had settled very well with treatment using acupuncture, magnets and diet therapy. I also saw Valerie for lumbar and hip pain in conjunction with Jeannette, our clinic's massage therapist. Towards the end of her term Valerie dropped by for me to take her pulse and keep an eye on how close she was getting to labour.

I received a phone call from Steve mid-way through a Saturday afternoon. We had made plans for me to assist with their labour and delivery. He informed me that Valerie was in labour and her contractions were getting strong. This was their first baby and Steve was excited.

When I arrived at their house, Valerie was pacing the living room, stopping every once in a while to labour through a contraction. Her water had broken earlier in the day with contractions starting immediately. Contractions were 5 minutes apart and strong enough that she wanted some pain control. I inserted needles into her sacral region and taped them down. I attached a TENS (trans electrical neural stimulation) machine to the needles to accentuate their effect. I also inserted needles in some points along her ear. With the needles in place Valerie was able to walk about and move through her contractions.

At 5 pm we decided to go to the hospital. Her examination on admission showed a 4 cm dilation. She still had very good pain control with contractions and excellent relaxation between contractions. Valerie felt better walking around, so we walked the halls with the acupuncture set up. I would occasionally add points to her hands, feet and legs, depending on whether she was stationary or walking around. She took control of the TENS machine during contractions, increasing its intensity to counter the contractions that were growing stronger.

By 10 pm she was 10 cm dilated and ready to push. With both Steve and myself at her side, their beautiful little girl was born.

*\*Not real names.*

*Acupuncture • Herbal Medicine • Massage Therapy • Craniosacral Therapy*

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# TREATING THE ATHLETE IN ALL OF US

Kim Bowie, B.Sc. • P.T. • R.Ac. • CAFCI

## Did you know?

- Our website has been recently updated. It's friendly and full of information. Check regularly for new articles and changes. [www.acupuncturehealthcalgary.com](http://www.acupuncturehealthcalgary.com)
- A recent study in Brazil treated men with sperm abnormalities (in concentration, motility and morphology) with acupuncture and moxabustion for 10 weeks. The patients of the study group presented a significant increase in the percentage of normal-form sperm compared to the control group.
- Traditional Chinese medicine will soon be regulated in the Province of Alberta. There is a plan to establish a College including both acupuncturists and traditional Chinese medicine practitioners under a professional label similar to the College of Physician and Surgeons.
- The Scenar device (see our website for more information) was developed by Russian scientists to ensure that Cosmonauts stayed healthy as they floated in the stratosphere.
- Sixteen month-old conjoined twins Ahmed and Mohamed Ibrahim of Egypt were treated extensively with craniosacral therapy before their exhaustive 33 hour surgery. Dr. John Upledger, the founder of craniosacral therapy, and a team of therapists treated the boys for five hours a day to create independent functioning of their body systems and improve motor skills.
- The US army is experimenting with using acupuncture to control pain on the battlefield. It has been shown that ear acupuncture will control pain as effectively as morphine without its side effects. In a battlefield situation this could have great advantages. Soldiers are paired up – if one gets hurt his buddy inserts two press needles in his ear and he will be able to continue fighting or at least get out of the action safely.

Eighty percent of the world's population is using some form of complementary or alternative medicine. Acupuncture is one of the most commonly used of the long list of therapies included in this category and is fast becoming a treatment of choice for athletes of all levels. The press has carried stories of Elvis Stoyko traveling with his own acupuncturist, Eric Lindros and Paul Kariya using acupuncture for recovery from repeat concussions and pitcher David Cole using acupuncture to get him back to peak performance after a shoulder problem.

Selection of medical personnel for national and international teams includes increasingly specialized skills and acupuncture is one of these. Over the 30 years that acupuncture has been taught to medical professionals in Canada there have been thousands who have added this tool to their practices. Best estimates are that there are over 1500 physical therapists and 500 physicians who have incorporated acupuncture into their practices, as well as a small but growing numbers of dentists and chiropractors.

Three provinces — BC, Alberta and Quebec — have regulation of acupuncturists and in these three there are around 1200 regulated acupuncturists. Health Canada estimates there are several thousand acupuncturists practicing in the remaining provinces which do not have regulation. The specialized area of sports acupuncture has developed in the United States and both the winter and summer U.S. Olympic training programs have sports acupuncturists permanently on staff.

When we think of acupuncture's role in sports we first think of the treatment of injury – keeping the athlete in their game or getting

them back afterwards. Acupuncture has an even more important role in prevention of injury and enhancement of performance. Many of the athletic injury problems we are called upon to treat are a reflection of an underlying systemic cause. Athletes may over train, don't always get enough sleep, can't always manage the perfect nutritional balance, and they worry – about being first, about the competition, about money, etc. All, or some of these, can lead to imbalances in the body which may eventually start to present as symptoms such as slower recovery times, fatigue, insomnia or poorer performance. Treating the whole system helps keep the body in balance and working well, and also reduces the chance of recurrent problems with strains, sprains and muscle pulls.

Chinese medicine is especially helpful in dealing with subtle health problems that haven't necessarily manifested into an identifiable disease, but are affecting the person's ability to function well. Chinese medicine emphasizes balance. Any illness comes from an imbalance in the whole body; either there is too much of something (a condition of excess) or not enough (a condition of depletion). In addition, there may be a blockage of energy or Qi. Energy should be moving freely and smoothly through the body, but if it is blocked in some way, disease or injury may result.

If we look at the list of events and conditions that can take an athlete out of good performance condition, one can see that they can apply to each of us. Metaphorically, each of us is an athlete. We want to be the best that we can be. The principles are the same for the top swimmer on the Canadian team, for the CEO of a large corporation, for a young mother, for an 80-year-old woman waiting for a hip replacement. Fine-tuning the body for maximum performance will help.

## WHY MASSAGE? WHY KNOT?

JEANNETTE RASKIN, B.A. • R.M.T. • Doula

THE  
ACUPUNCTURE



AND  
HEALTH CENTRE

Can we all benefit from a massage?

When many of us think of massage we think of a spa with pedicures and manicures — more pampering than wellness. The wide-ranging benefits of massage go far beyond pampering. The medical world is giving massage therapy a closer look and finding that the powers of touch are far-reaching. Many doctors, chiropractors, acupuncturists and physiotherapists are prescribing massage to their patients to help them deal with a large spectrum of problems.

In today's world, most of us live our lives bombarded with stress. Getting the kids to school, meeting deadlines at work, driving in rush hour traffic can all create stress. Our bodies are constantly in a fight or flight (stress) response. Some of the bodily reactions to stress include an increase in heart rate and muscle tension, and we breathe faster and shallower. A prolonged stress response can be the cause of many physical and mental illnesses. Chronic stress also impairs the immune system, which is often our first defense against disease. Massage can play an important role in stimulating the body's relaxation response and improving our immune system's ability to function, reducing the stress in our lives. A sense of relaxation is a key to our physical and mental well-being.

Another benefit of massage therapy is pain relief. Sometimes simply changing the activity that caused pain can

eliminate some of it. Too often however, the pain persists and takes on a life of its own. Massage can directly affect pain by releasing endorphins (the body's natural pain killers) and cortisol (the body's natural anti-inflammatory). Massage therapy can increase circulation in tight muscles, decrease muscle tension and muscle knots (trigger points), and help prevent muscle shortening and restricted movement. A massage therapist can also educate a client about injury prevention, including stretching and better ways to carry out various activities.

What does massage for wellness mean? Wellness is a relatively new word involving a proactive approach to our health instead of seeking treatment once we are sick. Injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome or a frozen shoulder are examples of small pains or injuries that, if left long enough and compensated for over a period of time, can become quite debilitating. Regular massage interrupts the stress/pain cycle before small triggers turn into bigger problems. Regular massage affects all the muscles, keeping them healthy and spotting potential problems before they become troublesome.

Finally, the intention behind massage is healing — whether it's deep tissue work or lighter, more energy-oriented work.

Yes, you will most definitely benefit from a massage.

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## FEE LIST

Initial Assessment including first acupuncture treatment	\$100.00
Acupuncture Treatment	\$60.00
Craniosacral Therapy	\$60.00
Ear Candling	\$60.00
Herbal Consultation	\$100.00
Home Treatment	\$120.00
IMS Treatment	\$30.00
Labour and Delivery Support including Pre & Post Natal Checkup	\$550.00
Labour Induction	\$100.00
Dental Analgesia	
First Hour	\$150.00
Each Subsequent Hour	\$100.00
Non-Surgical Face Lift Treatment	\$100.00
Massage Therapy	
Half-Hour	\$40.00
One Hour	\$60.00
Scenar Initial Assessment including first treatment	\$100.00
Scenar 15 minute treatment	\$60.00
Scenar 30 minute treatment	\$90.00
Scenar 45 minute treatment	\$120.00
Scenar 60 minute treatment	\$150.00
Acupuncture and Scenar	\$90.00

*gst not included*

*prices subject to change*

A cancellation fee will be charged unless 24 hours notice has been given.

**Gift Certificates are available**

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