



Acupuncture and Sleep

Good sleep quality is one of the most important components of a healthy life! It's right up there with proper diet and exercise. Most people occasionally experience some difficulties with sleep. If it's temporary, it generally does not indicate any serious condition. However, when sleep problems becomes chronic and begin to affect an individual's quality of life, there is a need to treat it. The harmful effects of insomnia include: increased risk of depression, obesity, hypertension, diabetes, increased risk of accidents as well as more absenteeism from work.

Different forms of sleep disruptions include:

- Difficulties falling asleep.
- Waking up during the night with difficulty falling back asleep
- Dream disturbed sleep
- Restless sleep- waking up un-refreshed

How does Acupuncture help?

Being poked with sharp objects might not seem like the most effective way to improve your sleep, but first impressions are often misleading. Acupuncture has a significant calming effect on the nervous system. It clears obstructions in the muscle and nerve channels, facilitates the flow of oxygen-enriched energy and relaxes the body. Studies have shown that acupuncture stimulates **melatonin** production, which is known as the "sleep hormone" (it is often low in those individuals having sleep issues). Research has also found that acupuncture affects production of **serotonin**, which helps regulate the sleep/wake cycle and can promote relaxation and deeper sleep.

Common noted benefits of acupuncture include: deeper breathing, improved digestive health, reduced stress, better sleeping patterns, decrease in various pains and a general sense of well-being. These are all excellent treatments for insomnia. Acupuncture treatment for sleep disorders can reduce the chronic pain that may exacerbate sleep disorders.

Lifestyle Factors that help prevent insomnia:

- 1. Exercising regularly** - best when done before dinner. Exercise should not be done too close to bedtime because it can cause restlessness.
- 2. Avoiding caffeine**- especially after noon. Avoid nicotine too.
- 3. Regular exposure to late afternoon sun**- this helps stimulate the release of melatonin to regulate circadian rhythm.
- 4. Practicing stress reduction techniques**-such as yoga, meditation, or deep relaxation.