

Acupuncture

Type	Safety	Efficacy	Recommended?
			
Alternative medicine	Some potential for harm	No evidence that it is effective	No

In detail:

Claims for treatment	Reduces or removes the perception of tinnitus.
What is the treatment?	Acupuncture needles are inserted at points in the body, which traditional practitioners claim helps restore the flow of energy (Qi) and so health ¹ .
What are the downsides of this treatment?	Risk of infection transmission ² . Cost – most people pay for acupuncture treatment privately.
Has there been research into this treatment?	Yes, there have been a number of papers published, and these have been examined in several systematic reviews.

Tinnitus UK try very hard to make sure our information is right, but this information should not be taken as medical advice. You should always check with your doctor before trying any tinnitus treatment.

What does the research say?	<p>An early systematic review showed that two unblinded studies showed a positive result, whereas four blinded studies showed no significant effect of acupuncture³.</p> <p>A more recent systematic review concluded that English studies reported negative results but that the Chinese studies seemed to indicate some relief from tinnitus could be found. However, many of these studies had methodological flaws⁴.</p> <p>An umbrella review concluded that it is not possible to say that acupuncture is effective for the treatment of tinnitus⁵.</p>
How high quality is the research?*	A
Tinnitus UK's opinion on this treatment:	<p>Acupuncture has not been shown to be effective as a treatment for tinnitus in rigorous randomized controlled trials.</p> <p>No recommendation for its use can be made, as per current tinnitus guidelines^{1 6 7}.</p>
Would Tinnitus UK support further studies into this treatment?	Yes, if a high quality, large scale study
Comments	In the UK, there is no statutory regulation of acupuncture or acupuncturists ¹ .

* A = Systematic review/meta analysis. B = Randomised control studies. C = Cohort studies. D = Case control studies. E = case studies/reports. +/- to be used to indicate quality within bands

For further information

The Tinnitus UK Tinnitus Support Team can answer your questions on any tinnitus related topics:

Telephone **0800 018 0527**
 Web chat **tinnitus.org.uk**
 Email **helpline@tinnitus.org.uk**
 Text/SMS **07537 416841**

We also offer a free tinnitus e-learning programme, Take on Tinnitus at **takeontinnitus.co.uk**

References

All online references accessed 7 November 2022 unless noted.

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Feedback

We welcome feedback on all our information.

You can pass your comments to our Communications Team by calling us on **0114 250 9933**, emailing **communications@tinnitus.org.uk** or by writing to us at the address below.

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