

Anxiety & Stress

Natural, evidence-informed support for a calmer nervous system

WHAT IS ANXIETY & STRESS?

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health conditions in the US, affecting more than 40 million adults. They encompass generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), panic disorder, social anxiety, and related conditions — all characterized by persistent, excessive worry or fear that interferes with daily life. Chronic stress, even when it doesn't meet clinical criteria for an anxiety disorder, can have serious effects on sleep, digestion, immune function, and cardiovascular health.

HOW CAN ACUPUNCTURE HELP?

- Activates the parasympathetic ("rest and digest") nervous system, lowering heart rate and cortisol levels — effects measurable within a single session.
- Modulates serotonin, dopamine, and GABA pathways in the brain, producing calming effects similar in mechanism (though not magnitude) to some anxiolytic medications.
- A 2016 review in the *Journal of Acupuncture and Meridian Studies* found acupuncture significantly reduced GAD symptoms compared to both waitlist controls and some pharmacological comparators.
- Reduces tension in the neck, shoulders, and diaphragm — physical patterns that both reflect and reinforce anxious states — creating a bidirectional calming effect.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Anxiety and stress treatments often produce noticeable relaxation during the very first session — many patients fall asleep on the table. Needles are placed in calming points on the wrists, ankles, scalp, and ears. The effect typically deepens over a 6–8 session course. Your practitioner may also recommend breathing techniques or lifestyle adjustments to extend the benefit between visits. Many patients transition to monthly "maintenance" sessions after their initial course.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR PRACTITIONER

- 1 How does acupuncture interact with the anxiety medication or therapy I'm already receiving?
- 2 Are there specific acupuncture points that are most effective for my type of anxiety (e.g., panic attacks vs. chronic worry)?
- 3 What can I do between sessions to reinforce the calming effects of treatment?