



**ALASKA CENTER  
FOR ACUPUNCTURE**

## **Monthly Featured Column in the Mat-Su Valley**

### **Frontiersman Newspaper**

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## **How To Get The Best Results From Acupuncture Treatment**

**Who is your greatest asset and worst liability when it come to healing from or preventing illness?**

- A. Your doctor or other healthcare practitioners
- B. Your insurance company
- C. Your husband/wife/friends/co-workers
- D. You
- E. Elvis

If you answered D., congratulations! Your prognosis is excellent – feel free to skip this week's column. If you answered A-C, then please keep reading. (If you answered E, please buy an airplane ticket and visit Graceland in the morning.)

One of the biggest challenges faced by all practitioners – both conventional and complementary – is the lack of patient compliance. A drug won't work if you don't take it, physical therapy won't work if you don't do the exercises, and acupuncture won't be nearly as effective if you continue to do the things that caused your illness in the first place.

The sad truth is that some people want to take drugs and surgery and not make any changes, while other people would rather get acupuncture, massage and herbs and not change. If you fall into either of these categories, then expect to be disappointed by ANY healing modality.

The most powerful force in the universe is human choice. This means you have the potential to change your life in every moment. Your practitioner's job is to help you recognize when you make choices that are not in alignment with your highest truth as well as with your health and fitness goals.

For example, we commonly treat people with recent back injuries or those with chronic back problems. Acupuncture is extremely effective at reducing back pain and beginning the healing process. However, the speed at which our clients recover can vary greatly from person to person.

Some variables are out of the client's control, such as the severity of the injury and the length of time that the person has had the problem. But other issues are absolutely under the person's command.

First, a person must be willing to commit to a reasonable frequency of treatments. While "one-treatment wonders" do happen, it's more common that patients will need to be seen regularly for a short period of time, and then less frequently as symptoms improve. A treatment schedule will vary with each individual and is discussed in your initial consultation and evaluation.

Second, eliminating inflammatory substances such as alcohol, sugar, caffeine and processed wheat can have a significant impact on speed of recovery of a back injury. Incorporating some gentle stretches, Yoga or Qigong (Chinese energy cultivation exercises) or stress reduction techniques can also make huge differences. Additionally, it's important to get plenty of rest and stay hydrated.

Do you know what many people say when asked to give up caffeine or sugar? They tell us how hard that would be for them. Or they say they will think about it. Or they tell us that they just can't do it and then list the reasons why it's impossible.

We always suggest that our patients find out what lifestyle changes work for them based on their own experience. We ask that they implement changes for four to eight weeks and see what they notice. Without exception, people who take us up on this challenge are shocked and illuminated by the results.

The heart of what acupuncture does is strengthen the underlying health and vitality of the person. No matter what the diagnosis, our goal is always to mobilize the healing potential of the human body, mind and spirit. We do this not by masking symptoms with mechanical or chemical interventions, but by waking up the spark in you that is connected to your highest self – the part of you that actually wants to heal **MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE**.

However, it does no good to draw up a shiny new blue print for healing if the person is going to shred it in favor of the old patterns and habits that resulted in the original illness. It's insane to do the same thing over and over again and expect a different outcome. Acupuncture will make it very clear where this is happening in your life, but it's up to you to make the lasting changes that will support treatment.

About two years ago, a woman in constant "10 out of 10" pain for two years came to see us. After 7 or 8 treatments her pain was completely gone. We noticed that she implemented every suggestion we made. When we asked her why she was so compliant, she replied, "I pay you to tell me what to do. Why would I waste your time and my money by not doing it? Her words say it all!

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