



Pain can occur for a variety of reasons. Muscle soreness is common during the beginning of a new training regimen. Known as delayed onset muscle soreness, the discomfort is most intense 24 to 72 hours after strenuous or unfamiliar exercise. This pain occurs as muscle fibres experience small micro tears, stimulating your pain receptors. Acupuncture can help reduce this soreness, perhaps because it increases local blood circulation, improving the body's ability to repair damaged tissue and carry out waste products.

Pain might also be from sprains, strains, fractures, dislocations, muscle tension, scar tissue, arthritis and other chronic joint issues. Injuries fall into two general categories — acute traumatic injury and chronic or overuse injury. An acute injury happens, for example, when someone turns their ankle and sprains it, or when someone takes a bad hit while playing a sport. Chronic injuries may occur from repetitive training, like shin splints from running or tennis elbow from racket sports. Acupuncture to address these injuries prior to any competition or event is key. If you've ever gone into an event with an injury, you know you don't perform optimally.

Studies on healthy subjects have shown that acupuncture may also help athletic performance. Testing elite male basketball players, researchers found that acupuncture prior to activity resulted in an improvement in maximum heart rate, oxygen consumption, and blood lactic acid buildup, helping the athletes to recover faster during and after sport. Other studies have noted an increase in muscular strength and power using acupuncture.

Vital to a faster recovery is what happens post-event by addressing the inflammation, muscle fatigue, and any injuries that may have flared up.

For these reasons, it's no surprise that more and more athletes — from weekend warriors to elite professionals — are choosing acupuncture, not just to treat injuries, but also to boost athletic performance.

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