

## Got Chi?



**I never saw it coming. Not in a million years.**

Acupuncture? Needles all over my body? There was no amount of money you could pay me to do that.

But a few weeks ago, something made me reconsider this type of therapy.

Maybe it was the electric shock-like headaches. Perhaps it was the burning sensation that would engulf my entire left leg anytime I stood. Combine that with battling the Texas heat, and I'd reached the point where I was willing to try **anything**.

A few of my friends recommended a local acupuncturist and raved about what a positive experience they had.

So, I started reading about the benefits of acupuncture, how it could help with pain, vertigo and even fatigue. I queried others in the MS community for their thoughts as well.

Then, after a particularly difficult week of MS symptoms, I decided to make an appointment and give it a go.

During my initial visit, we discussed what I could expect, realistic expectations and potential timelines.

The acupuncturist was confident that the treatment would reduce the pain I'd been having. She then included a disclaimer that there's no medical evidence of it reducing the frequency of exacerbations or slowing the progression of MS.

But I wasn't looking for a cure... **only relief.**

For my first session, I started lying face down and the acupuncturist gently inserted needles throughout my back, legs, hands, feet and head.

I barely felt any pain during the needle insertion, only a slight "pin prick" when they were put in my hands.

She dimmed the lights, placed a heating lamp near my legs and left the room for about 20 minutes.

Ocean waves crashing upon the shore played from a nearby speaker as my mind drifted off. I was on a beautiful island, where there was no pain, vertigo, fatigue, foot drop—it was an escape far, far, far away from MS. And I felt myself nod off for a brief moment...

It certainly didn't **feel** like my body was covered in needles!

She re-entered the room and, in what seemed like one fluid motion, swiftly removed all the needles. Then I flipped on my back, as she placed needles on my chest, legs, hands and feet.

I was still a bit drowsy when she started to twist a needle in my left leg. Out of nowhere, **I felt a bolt of energy.** It started in my lower leg, then spread through my entire body.

"Whoa! What was that!?", I asked.

The acupuncturist replied that it was my **Chi**. Pronounced "chee," (and also spelled "qi"), it refers to the body's life force. One of the goals of acupuncture is to balance the body's Chi.

It sounds bizarre, perhaps a little scary, but the best way to describe the experience is **magical.**

Because in that surreal moment, my leg felt like it was dancing. Then a calm and happy feeling extended from my head to my toes.

Eventually, that feeling of euphoria faded and my left leg felt like it was bandaged up, as if it was in a splint. It was a wonderful and comforting feeling

Maybe, in that moment, it was my Chi finally flowing freely—I'll leave that to the experts to debate—but something **has** changed for the better over the past few weeks from these treatments.

Do I still get headaches? Yep—but thankfully not as much. Vertigo? Still around. More energy?

Maybe, but nothing remarkable.

My big win is, **I CAN STAND** on my left leg... and **NOT** be in excruciating pain.

Fireworks!

Applause!

Champagne popping!

My leg isn't healed. If I stand for a prolonged period of time, I'm still greeted with some soreness and throbbing pain the next day.

But it's been over a **decade** since I can last remember being able to stand and not wince, shift my weight to my right leg or immediately look for a place to sit down.

A magical improvement on my life less traveled. With MS, I never know what the future will bring, but for now, my Chi and I are all smiles and **standing strong**.