

# Hypnotherapy and Acupuncture

## Hypnotherapy

Hypnotherapy is intended to act on underlying impulses to weaken the desire to smoke or strengthen the will to stop. Hypnotherapy as a method for giving up smoking is not currently recommended by the NHS as there is not enough evidence to prove it works.

A course of hypnotherapy can be useful to help you relax during and after quitting as a lot of people miss the “time out” that lighting and smoking a cigarette gives them.

## Acupuncture

Acupuncture is the stimulation of certain points of the body using fine needles, finger pressure or heat. Acupuncture as a method for giving up smoking is not currently recommended by the NHS as there is not enough evidence to prove it works.

It can also be very costly!

Some people find acupuncture helps them with relaxation.

The most successful way of quitting is to use the service provided by your local NHS Stop Smoking Service. This is proven to be up to four times more effective than trying to quit on your own. The only cost involved is for nicotine replacement products, Zyban® or Champix® if you normally pay for prescriptions.

### Hypnotherapy

*Although hypnotherapy is widely promoted as a method for aiding smoking cessation it is not a method that can be recommended by the NHS as it is not approved by NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence).*

This is due to the lack of clinical evidence available to support its claims. Although studies have been done one of the key problems in determining the effectiveness of hypnosis is the lack of common standards in treatments offered ie type of questions asked, number of treatments offered.

The conclusion drawn by the authors of the 2005 Cochrane review was that “We could not show that hypnotherapy had a greater effect on six month quit rates than any other interventions or no treatment.”

There is also the matter of the cost, as a course of hypnosis for smoking cessation can reach from £50 to £250. Obviously this treatment cannot be recommended by the smoking cessation services given the lack of clinical evidence.

Where hypnosis can be useful is as a tool to promote relaxation during and after a quit attempt and it would be appropriate to encourage quitters undergoing intensive support to seek such treatment if they felt they needed help with stress or anxiety.

### Acupuncture

Acupuncture is the stimulation of certain points of the body and may be done by needles, finger pressure, electrical stimulation or heat. The evidence that acupuncture does not help people to stop smoking is strong.

A systematic review looked at 22 good-quality studies. Altogether the studies included more than 4,000 people who were trying to stop smoking. Some people were given acupuncture whilst others were given a placebo or no treatment at all. None of these studies showed that more people stopped because they used acupuncture.

As with hypnosis this precludes acupuncture from being recommended by the smoking cessation services.

### References:

Abbot NC, Stead LF, White AR, et al. Hypnotherapy for Smoking Cessation (Cochrane Review) 2002

White AR, Rampes H, Ernst E. Acupuncture for Smoking Cessation (Cochrane Review) 2002