

### Depression & Acupuncture by David McCartney

Although we all experience a low mood from time to time, these feelings usually last for perhaps a few days and soon after we “re-boot” and get back to our positive selves once again. For someone with depression however, the ability to re-boot and get back to oneself is often a seemingly impossible task. According to a study in 2008 by the World Health Organization (WHO), it is predicted that by the year 2020 depression will be second only to heart disease as an international health burden.

photo credit: [Helga Weber](#)

Although there are many factors that contribute to depression, depression is believed to be the result of chemical imbalances in the brain, especially low levels of the neurotransmitter serotonin. Depression is characterized by chronic or recurring symptoms of low mood, irritability, anxiety, insomnia, poor appetite, weight change, fatigue, lack of motivation, loss of libido, aches and pains, an inability to concentrate as well as black emotional episodes and suicidal thoughts.

Obviously not every person with depression will exhibit all of these symptoms. Indeed, depression is commonly divided into three subdivisions of mild, moderate and severe. Acupuncture treatment therefore will depend on the types and severity of symptoms of each person's depression.

Many people looking to treat their depression turn to Acupuncture and I have treated many such people down through the years. Similar to the actions of anti-depressants, Acupuncture treatment helps to release serotonin in the brain and alleviate symptoms. As a stand alone therapy, Acupuncture, along with other physically therapies such as Massage, is very helpful in successfully treating mild to moderate depressive symptoms. In tandem with Acupuncture & Massage, I often advise exercise and dietary changes also as a way to eliminate and alleviate symptoms.

In cases of severe depression, people who look to Acupuncture for treatment are chronic sufferers and will be on anti-depressant drugs and/or undergoing psychotherapy. In severe depression, Acupuncture has an additive benefit and can be safely combined with conventional medical treatments, helping to reduce their side effects and enhance their therapeutic effects. Many long suffering clients have reported to me that the addition of Acupuncture to their treatment programs has significantly improved their symptoms and reduced the severity, length and frequency of any depressive episodes they have suffered in the past.

If you feel that Acupuncture is something for you in dealing with your depression please don't hesitate to call us to find out more and to make an appointment.

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**tel: +353 1 516 6193 - email: [info@wisdomforhealth.ie](mailto:info@wisdomforhealth.ie) - [www.wisdomforhealth.ie](http://www.wisdomforhealth.ie)**

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