

Summary of National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guidelines

Tension type headaches

Guidelines from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) states that a course of up to 10 sessions of acupuncture over a 5-8 week period may be beneficial in preventing chronic tension-type headaches.

From : NHS Choices **Your health, your choices**

Long-term back pain

If you have had back pain for more than six weeks (known as chronic back pain), your GP will advise you about which painkillers to take and recommend the treatments listed below.

- **Exercise** - usually take the form of a group class supervised by a qualified instructor. The classes may include exercises to strengthen your muscles and improve your posture, as well as aerobic and stretching exercises. NICE recommend a maximum of eight sessions over a period of up to 12 weeks.
- **Manual therapy** - there are different types of manual therapy including manipulation, mobilisation and massage, usually carried out by chiropractors, osteopaths or physiotherapists (chiropractic and osteopathy aren't widely available on the NHS). NICE recommend a maximum of nine sessions over a period of up to 12 weeks.
- **Alexander technique** - teaches you how to eliminate unnecessary muscular tension from your body. It aims to make you aware of any bad postural habits that you have while sitting or standing, as well as any inefficiencies in the way you move. You'll learn how to improve the balance and alignment of your body.
- **Acupuncture** - an ancient Chinese treatment where fine needles are inserted at different points in the body. It's been shown to help reduce lower back pain. NICE recommend that an acupuncture course should include a maximum of 10 sessions over a period of up to 12 weeks.

These treatments are often effective for people whose back pain is seriously affecting their ability to carry out daily activities and who feel distressed and need help coping.

Acupuncture for Migraine

If medication is unsuitable, or it doesn't help to prevent migraines, you may want to consider acupuncture.

NICE states that a course of up to 10 sessions over a five to eight week period may be beneficial. Read more about acupuncture.

Link to NHS UK website covering Western acupuncture

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Acupuncture/Pages/Introduction.aspx>