

Cosmetic Acupuncture for Aging, Allergies, and Sun Spots

By [Shellie Goldstein](#) | May 30, 2014 | Last Updated: May 29, 2014 10:38 pm



Anna came into my office with puffy eyes, a red nose, sagging cheek muscles, fine lines on her forehead, and a deeper furrow between her eyebrows. At a glance, it was clear that she was suffering from seasonal allergies as well as the additional internal and external stress from these allergies, all of which were exacerbating signs of aging.

I also knew from Anna’s pale, delicate skin tone that the honey-colored sun spots on her cheeks would darken from sun exposure in the coming summer months, her skin would weather, and her well-moisturized complexion would become dry. Anna’s allergy symptoms, combined with the approaching summer season, were enough to have her looking and feeling older than she was.

Healing the Skin Through the Organs

Whether it’s wrinkles, puffiness (often accompanied by watery eyes from allergies), or dark spots caused by prolonged exposure to sunlight, cosmetic acupuncture can alleviate the symptoms. It is based on the principles of traditional Chinese medicine as they apply to your appearance.

Chinese medicine sees your physical appearance—facial puffiness; watery, itchy eyes; sun spots; wrinkles; and sagging skin—as something deeper than allergies or excess sun exposure.

Chinese medicine views wellness and aging through your organ systems, the quality of the Qi and blood that run through and around them, and the balance between them. Therefore, cosmetic acupuncture treats the imbalances in your organs, and your skin naturally improves as a result of better organ health.

Internal balance is maintained by a steady flow of energy known as Qi throughout the body. When Qi is healthy, it moves freely like a summer breeze, so that you feel and look your best. When Qi is weak, stuck, or congested, it can be oppressive and cause stagnation. To treat allergies, an acupuncturist may adjust the Qi in your lungs, spleen, and kidneys.

The integrity of the kidneys and spleen, where Qi is made and stored, are germane to the health of your energy system. Disharmony in the kidneys and spleen will, therefore, lead to imbalances in other organs as well.

Lungs. The lungs are responsible for respiratory function—our ability to take in air and expel what we don’t need. Allergens such as pollen can irritate the lungs and cause common allergy symptoms.

It is the health of the lungs that determines whether or not someone will get these symptoms and not just the presence of the allergen itself. When the lung energy is weak, you are more likely to get symptoms. By strengthening the lung energy, you can eliminate the reaction.

Sunburns and spots. For sunburns and sun spots, Chinese medicine looks at your heart and liver, where blood is made and stored. Blood, like Qi, is a vital life substance, and when is not flowing properly, you can get sharp pains, clots, and sunspots.

Sagging and wrinkles. Imbalances in the spleen and the liver are the most likely culprits of sagging muscles and wrinkles.

According to Chinese medicine, the spleen is responsible for muscle tone. When the spleen is healthy, the muscles of your face and body are firm. When it is weak, they can become soft and puffy. The liver influences the nervous system and the way muscles contract.

Constant muscle contraction caused by habitual movement or nervous muscle twitching is what causes wrinkles. For example, creases between the eyebrows and around the eyes become prominent due to constant contraction of the forehead and the muscles supporting the eyes.

Puffiness. Skin puffiness may be a considered a weakness in the kidneys. The kidneys direct the flow of water through and from the body. When your kidney Qi is weak, the kidneys are unable to properly distribute or filter water, so it accumulates in skin tissue, causing swelling and bloating.

Depending on the problem being addressed, a cosmetic acupuncturist may recommend acupuncture alone or acupuncture in conjunction with other modalities such as cupping, microcurrent, LED (light emitting diode), microdermabrasion, or ultrasound.

Time and Cost

During each session, a combination of 12–20 acupuncture points on the body and face will be selected. As the changes from the initial treatments take effect, the acupuncture points chosen will change.

Treatments are generally performed in a series of 10–20 weekly sessions. Depending upon the problem, number of modalities selected, and the practitioner’s level of experience, prices can range from \$100 to over \$300 per treatment.

At-Home Maintenance

The best results from cosmetic acupuncture treatments require at-home maintenance. In addition to using a good skin-care cream, I also recommend doing self-acupressure treatments. You can ask your cosmetic acupuncturist what points would be best for you.

I’ve also summarized my knowledge in the book “Your Best Face Now: Look Younger in 20 Days with the Do-It-Yourself Acupressure Facelift,” which shows you which acupressure points to engage depending on your area of concern.

In addition to acupuncture and acupressure techniques, it is essential to protect your skin with proper skin care, including daily use of UVA and UVB zinc oxide-based sunblock.

Anna’s Outcome

After a series of cosmetic acupuncture treatments, and with careful home maintenance, Anna was no longer suffering from allergies. She was very pleased with the overall aesthetic results: no more puffiness, fewer dark spots, and fewer and shallower wrinkles.

To target the remaining stubborn spots and wrinkles, I started her on a course of dermarolling sessions. Dermarolling involves a small roller with multiple small needles being rolled across the dermis to create tiny pinpricks—stimulating collagen formation as the skin begins to heal.

Anna now comes in occasionally for maintenance acupuncture appointments but is able to keep up her improved appearance by staying healthy and following a daily skin-care regime designed specifically for her skin condition.

Shellie Goldstein is a licensed acupuncturist and esthetician with a private clinic in NYC. Chronic back pain in her 20s lead her to discover the healing benefits of acupuncture, and she was one of the first acupuncturists to work in hospitals and health care facilities in New York State. www.hampton acupuncture.com