

## Top 5 Reasons Why Every Parent Needs Acupuncture

By Janine L. Agoglia L.Ac.

If you are like most parents, your needs come last. The kids, the house and the job usually take priority and your personal needs often fall to the bottom of the pile. Because of this, it is really common for parents to be in a constant state of stress. You may call it being overly busy or having too much to do with not enough time to do it, but it boils down to the same thing: you are overwhelmed.



The best way to tackle this is by putting your needs first. You might think that that seems selfish given all your responsibilities, but hear me out. In an airplane emergency, you are supposed to put on your oxygen mask first before helping your child. That way you are still conscious and can be more helpful to those around you. In your day to day life, wouldn't it be better for your child(ren) if you were functioning at your best? How much easier is it to cope with a screaming child when you've eaten and had a good night's sleep, as opposed to when you are hungry and sleep deprived? I hope it doesn't take an airplane emergency for you to see the value in putting your needs first. As parents, we want to do the best job possible, but we can't be our best parental selves if we are stressed out, hungry, exhausted, under-exercised and overwhelmed.

Beyond the basics of good nutrition and exercise (which are both **vital** important), acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine can be great supports to help you feel better and function more effectively as a parent, taking you out of your overwhelm and helping you feel better on a daily basis.

Here are my Top 5 ways that Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) can help:

1. **Stress/Depression/Anxiety.** Life stress comes from many places. There is the bodily stress of not eating the right foods, not getting enough good quality sleep and exercising either too much or too little. But, there is also the stress of just being a parent. Whether it is the stress of new parents learning to take care of their newborn, or seasoned parents navigating the world of a teenager, or parents dealing with multiple children at different stages of life, parents feel stress.

Acupuncture calms the nervous system and takes you out of your head and brings you back into your body, helping you feel more calm, relaxed and grounded. Worry and anxiety are common parts of parenthood, but they shouldn't dominate your thinking. If they do, reducing your stress and anxiety will improve your ability to relate to and take care of your child(ren).

2. **Sleep.** As parents, it is common for the “good night’s sleep” to be a bit elusive. We sometimes have "little visitors" that wake us at night, or we are in a constant state of listening, but many parents don't sleep well anyway. The stress of life, technology shining in our faces, hormones, poor eating or drinking habits, are all things that can affect our sleep. If you are someone who ruminates over your to-do list at any time of day or night, I suggest keeping a pad and pen near your bed so that you can write things down; once your items are in black and white, you no longer have to remember them and you can go to sleep without worry. I don't advise using an electronic device only because it will be light shining in your eyes which will further impair your ability to sleep. When writing on the pad, you can just write in the dark or use very low light flashlight shining away from you. If you are awake in the middle of the night for no reason or have trouble falling or returning to sleep, acupuncture can help you find a more peaceful, better quality sleep. By regulating hormones, TCM helps to create internal balance, making it easier for you to fall asleep and stay asleep. Even if you are getting visitors at night (or half sleeping waiting for your teenager to get home), acupuncture can give you better quality sleep while you are sleeping and help you get back to sleep when you are awakened.

3. **More Energy.** What parent (or person in general) doesn't want better energy? TCM can help improve your energy without the use of stimulants. Although stimulants, like caffeine, can give you an energy boost when you need it, in the long run they can actually drain and deplete your energy. Stimulants cause the body to release a small shot of adrenaline, rather than giving you real usable fuel as energy. Improving your energy through diet, acupuncture and/or Chinese herbal medicine can go a long way towards reducing your parental overwhelm. It is much easier to cope with life challenges when you have the energy to do it. Your fatigue might be related to lack of good sleep, poor food choices, too many stimulants, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), Adrenal Fatigue, low Thyroid or a number of other causes. Having support can make a big difference in how you feel from day to day.

4. **Menopause.** Having hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings and insomnia can make it much more difficult sleep, let alone handle missed curfews and back talk. Reducing perimenopause and menopause related symptoms can help make you more emotionally and physically comfortable, thus reducing your stress and overwhelm. When you are calm and rested, coping with life is just easier.

5. **Nagging Chronic Conditions** that prevent you from being your best. Whether it is a shoulder injury that keeps you from playing ball with your kids, [migraines](#) that interfere with your ability to function, Irritable Bowel Syndrome that keeps you close to a toilet at all times, or something else, these are things that interfere with your ability to be there for your kids in the way that you would like. There are many conditions that acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine can effectively treat. Talk to your local provider and see if your condition can be treated with these natural interventions.



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Janine partners with her patients to address any lifestyle, emotions, exercise, diet and/or stress issues that might be interfering with their overall health. Her passion is to help each person feel better in his or her daily life and to help each patient overcome their particular health challenge(s).

In 2008 Janine co-founded Veterans Acupuncture Care (VAC) Metrowest, a community-style acupuncture clinic that offers free acupuncture to veterans and their family members for stress and trauma relief.

Janine is also a yoga instructor and has been teaching since 1998. She is Co-Director of Yoga at Lumina Mind Body Studios in Wayland and Natick, MA.