

Know Your Acupuncturist

Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine (AOM) practitioners complete 3 - 4 years of AOM-specific graduate education and clinical training before becoming licensed to practice. As detailed on the chart below, other healthcare practitioners complete significantly less acupuncture training.

Acupuncture should only be administered by a practitioner with specific and extensive AOM education and a comprehensive understanding of Oriental medical diagnostic procedures to ensure proper needling and energy balancing. Oriental Medicine is a whole person approach of mind, body and spirit that includes acupuncture, herbs, nutrition, meditation and Asian bodywork (e.g. acupressure, shiatsu).

Verify your practitioner's Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine education and knowledge to be confident that you're receiving the most professional care to optimize your health and wellness.

Contact Hours	Typical Practitioner Title	Application
1,500 - 2,000 hours in acupuncture (3-4 years)*	Licensed Acupuncturist (LAc)** with a degree / diploma from an ACAOM-accredited college who has passed NCCAOM national certification exams.***	A broad range of health issues, including chronic disease, pain, internal medicine, rehabilitation, and prevention
300 hours or less in acupuncture	Medical Doctor, Osteopath, Naturopath or Chiropractor: The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that medical doctors who wish to use acupuncture as a technique have a minimum of 200 hours of training, with the amount of training for other health personnel being variable according to the specific application. For a full course of training, WHO recommends 1,500 hours of training in acupuncture for physicians.	Pain, basic ailments
100 hours or less in acupuncture	Detox / Auricular Acupuncture Technician or Chiropractor (detox techs are generally limited to 5 points on the ear)	Addiction & pain
40-50 contact hours in "dry needling."	Physical Therapist who uses an acupuncture needle to perform dry needling in the treatment of muscle trigger points	Musculoskeletal pain

*ACAOM's total curriculum requirement for an acupuncture-only training program is 1905 hours and ranges between 1950-2600 hours for ACAOM-accredited and candidate acupuncture only training programs, with a minimum of 450 hours in the biomedical clinical sciences.

**Some states also designate the licensing title (non-degree) as DOM or DAC, or Acupuncture Physician. Licensed Acupuncturists may have also obtained an OMD, PhD, or DAC for non-extensive post-graduate training. Thus, it is important to ask where such a title was received.

***ACAOM (Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine, www.acaom.org); NCCAOM (National Commission for the Certification of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine, www.nccaom.org).