

WHAT'S THE POINT?!

If you've tried dieting in the hope of losing a few kilos by Christmas and all you to show for it is nothing... then maybe it's time you think about sticking a few needles in your ear, says **Rhea Dhanbhora**. Confused? Read on...



>> Acupuncture can help you reduce your tummy fat

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If the sentence above shocked you, don't worry because we're about to explain. We know how frustrating it can be to have a spare tyre around your waist that just won't go away. Acupuncture for weight loss is a trend that's been around for a while and several people have resorted to this ancient practice in a bid to lose extra flab. It's supposed to help you stop overeating, reduce stress and even treat your digestive problems. This treatment helps release endorphins, which also make you feel good, so you won't feel grumpy, which strict diets often make you feel. From the ear and mouth to stomach and ovaries, several forms of acupuncture promise weight loss. However, not all are supported by too much research. But, a new study, published in the journal *Acupuncture in Medicine*, gives you the perfect excuse to go ahead and try this out for yourself.

THE STUDY

The study, done on just ear acupuncture, pointed out that placing just five needles in your outer ear can help get rid of that tummy fat that is so hard to reduce even with exercise and diets. Lead researcher, Sabina Lim, from the department of meridian and acupuncture, in the Graduate College of Basic Korean Medical Science at Kyung Hee University in Seoul, South Korea, explained that while normal hunger acupuncture points are good, central obesity is combated brilliantly with the continuous stimulation of these five acupuncture points.

The study went on for eight weeks, during which participants followed restrictive diets (healthy ones) but not weight loss diets and were told not to increase their exercise routine. With repeated treatments (some sham and some real), researchers noted that 15 of those receiving sham treatments actually even dropped out of the study because it was so ineffective. The rest saw a significant drop in overall weight, the highest being around the belly. What leads us to believe it works is that those receiving sham treatments did not lose any weight at all.

THE LOWDOWN

Why and how does this happen? We were wondering too but thankfully, the study makes it all clear. You know how the metabolic function of your body is related to weight loss, right? The faster your metabolism, the more fat you burn and the slower it is, the more you accumulate. Now, what this acupuncture does, is increase your metabolic function. So, it's no secret and not very complicated to figure out how the procedure works.

BOTTOM LINE

The study does not prove its effectiveness — after all, it could just be a placebo effect. But, whichever way it works, it actually *does work*. The thing about acupuncture though, is that it won't keep the weight away. The weight loss is for people who can't lose the weight to begin with, but keeping it off depends on you. So, if you think you can't lose weight loss any other way — go ahead and try it out, there's no downside.

« KNOW MORE: FOOD THAT LETS YOU GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP! ZZZZZZ....

With all the stress and hassles that life throws at us, it's no surprise that insomnia and restless sleep are plaguing city folk. Some food items can help you get adequate sleep. **Priyanka Singh** draws up a list of the top five

WALNUTS

Walnuts are a good source of tryptophan, a sleep-enhancing amino acid that helps make serotonin and melatonin, the 'body clock' hormone that sets your sleep-wake cycles.

Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that people who ate a meal that included jasmine rice fell asleep faster than when they ate other types of rice.

LETTUCE

A salad with dinner can speed up your bedtime, since lettuce contains lactucarium, which has sedative properties and affects the brain similarly to opium. You can also try this brew from the book *Stealth Health*: Simmer three to four large lettuce leaves in a cup of water for 15 minutes. Remove from heat, add two sprigs of mint, and sip just before you go to bed.

>> Walnuts are a great source of tryptophan — a sleep enhancing amino acid



CHAMOMILE TEA

A cup of chamomile tea will help you sleep. According to research, drinking this tea is associated with an increase of glycine, a chemical that relaxes nerves and muscles and acts like a mild sedative.

ALMONDS

Almonds are rich in magnesium, a mineral needed for quality sleep. A study published in the Journal of Orthomolecular Medicine found that when the body's magnesium levels are too low, it makes it harder to fall asleep.