

Know Your Acupuncturist

Practitioners whose educational focus is in Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine receive approximately 80% of their training exclusively in this field, and undergo an extensive clinical internship averaging 3 years. Other healthcare practitioners may use acupuncture, which is one of the many therapies of Oriental Medicine, as an adjunct to their primary practice. While all of these practitioners also have training in western medical sciences, this chart is designed to illustrate the varying levels of acupuncture training generally undertaken by healthcare professionals.

Amount of Training In Acupuncture	Practitioner
<p>1363 hours to 2000 hours in Acupuncture (or 2000-3000 hours in Oriental Medicine)*</p> <p><i>Licensed Acupuncturist Traditional Chinese Medicine Comprehensively-trained Acupuncturist Oriental Medicine Practitioner Oriental Medical Acupuncture</i></p>	<p>Typically a Licensed Acupuncturist (L.Ac.) or Registered Acupuncturist whose primary training is in Acupuncture and/or Oriental Medicine, and has:</p> <p>(a) obtained a 3 to 4-year master's level degree or diploma from a school approved by Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine (ACAOM), and</p> <p>(b) been awarded the Dipl.Ac. (Diplomate in Acupuncture) designation upon successful examination by the National Commission for the Certification of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) which is the national standard used for licensing in most states. **</p> <p>-Used for a broad range of health issues, including chronic disease, pain, internal medicine, rehabilitation, and prevention based on Oriental medical theory.</p>
<p>300 hours or less</p> <p><i>Medical Acupuncture Meridian Balancing/Therapy Chiropractic Acupuncture Naturopathic Acupuncture</i></p>	<p>Typically a medical doctor, osteopath, naturopath, or chiropractor who uses acupuncture as an adjunctive therapy. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that medical doctors have 200 hours of training to know when to refer to a more fully-trained Acupuncturist or Oriental Medicine practitioner.***</p> <p>-Most commonly used for pain and basic ailments.</p>
<p>Around 100 hours or less</p> <p><i>Detox Tech Chiropractic Acupuncture Medical Acupuncture</i></p>	<p>Typically a detoxification technician or chiropractor (detox techs should be under supervision of a Licensed Acupuncturist, see above, and are limited to 5 points on the ear)</p> <p>-Most commonly used for pain management or addiction & detoxification through auricular acupuncture.</p>

For a list of ACAOM-approved colleges and national education and training standards, see www.acaom.org.

For a list of CCAOM member colleges, all of which are ACAOM-approved, see www.ccaom.org.

For national certification standards, see www.nccaom.org.

*Many Acupuncture & Oriental Medical schools exceed 2000 hours.

**Acupuncture/Oriental Medical practitioners are able to obtain a D.A.O.M. doctoral degree from an ACAOM-approved clinical doctoral program. Some states also designate the licensing title (non-degree) as D.O.M. or D.Ac, or Acupuncture Physician. Licensed Acupuncturists may have also obtained an O.M.D., Ph.D., or D.Ac. for non-extensive post-graduate training (from unaccredited programs). Thus, it is important to ask where such a title was received.

***Some medical doctors and chiropractors are trained and licensed in both western and Oriental medical acupuncture. Ask your physician about his or her credentials. **Acupuncture should only be administered by a practitioner who has specific training in this field, due to risk of improper needling, inadequate understanding of Oriental medical diagnostic procedures, transmission of disease, imbalancing of energy, or ethical violations.**

Produced by the Council of Colleges of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine (CCAOM). For reprint information contact 301-476-7790 or executivedirector@ccaom.org. For information about the Council please see our web site at: <http://www.ccaom.org>