

# Who's Needling You?

Lots of healthcare providers want to needle people, but only acupuncturists have extensive training in this specialized healthcare system. Acupuncturists have graduate degrees from accredited colleges and 3-4 years of clinical training before they begin their practice. Poorly trained people, on the other hand, may project confidence, but they can do serious harm with needles. It's important to pick a provider whose skill will help you achieve the results you want in the most effective and efficient way possible.

Acupuncturists recognize that many things influence how quickly and how well you recover and maintain your health. Their training enables them to utilize a whole person approach to achieve better health using a comprehensive system that includes acupuncture, nutrition, herbs, Asian bodywork (ex: acupressure, tui na, shiatsu), qi gong, tai chi, lifestyle coaching and meditation.

This chart illustrates the levels of acupuncture education that various categories of people doing needling receive. It does not cover training in related curriculum such as biosciences, but focuses on the training provided in the acupuncture healthcare specialty. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends 1,500 hours for a full course of training in acupuncture for physicians. **Acupuncture should only be administered by a practitioner who has specific education in this field, due to the risk of improper needling, inadequate understanding of medical diagnostic procedures, transmission of disease, imbalancing of energy or ethical violations.** Confirm your practitioner's education before letting someone needle you to ensure that you are receiving the most professional acupuncture care available for your health and wellbeing.

Contact Hours in Acupuncture Education	Practitioner Title	Application
3-4 years (1,500 – 2,000 hours of acupuncture specialization) as part of a graduate degree program and extensive continuing acupuncture education requirements that must be met every 4 years	To become a <b>Licensed Acupuncturist</b> in Michigan, you must have obtained a graduate degree from an ACAOM accredited college and have passed the national certification board exams administered by the NCCAOM.	A broad range of health issues, including chronic disease, pain, internal medicine, fertility, rehabilitation, complex multi-system health problems, longevity, wellness and prevention
300 hours or less of acupuncture training	Typically, <b>physicians</b> use acupuncture as an adjunctive technique. In Michigan, medical doctors and osteopaths are required to have 100 hours of live lectures and clinical training and a total of 300 hours of acupuncture education before practicing acupuncture. However the World Health Organization recommends a full course of 1,500 hours of acupuncture training for physicians.	Pain, basic ailments
100 hours or less of acupuncture training	A <b>detox/auricular acupuncture technician</b> is limited to performing the 5 point NADA addiction ear protocol.	Addiction and pain
40-50 contact hours of continuing education seminars in "dry needling".	In Michigan, "dry needling" is legally defined as acupuncture. A <b>physical therapist</b> performing dry needling is operating outside of their scope of practice unless they also have an acupuncture license.	Musculoskeletal pain
No training.	Acupuncture needles are classified as medical devices that only certain licensed healthcare providers can legally use. Many acupuncture points are next to major veins, arteries and important organs, like the heart and lungs. <b>Untrained people</b> can obtain illegal acupuncture needles on the internet. But you risk infection, injury, and even death by letting an untrained person put a needle in you.	No legitimate use.