

How To Combine Needling and Non-Needle Microcurrent Electro-Acupuncture

By Darren Starwynn, O.M.D.

I have been an advocate for teaching non-needle electro-acupuncture skills using microcurrent for many years, and my many articles in this publication have explored manifold aspects of this specialty. But let's set the record straight. You won't get me to give up my needles until you pry them from my dead, cold fingers!

In my practice I am dedicated to offering my patients what will help them the most, and that often takes the form of varying combinations of needle therapies, microlight therapy, herbs and nutrition, core emotional healing and lifestyle recommendations. This article will focus on optimal methods for combining needle and non-needle microcurrent therapeutics.

Let's first take a look at the strengths and limitations of each method, as indicated in this table. An X in one column only indicates that that method is superior for providing the listed benefit (in my opinion). X's in both columns indicate that a combination of methods works best.

Benefit	Better with needle therapy	Better with microcurrent/light
Quickness of response		X
Shorter treatment time		X
Fewer treatments needed	X	
Move stagnant blood	X	
Tissue healing acceleration		X
Accelerated rehab after injury		X
Treatment through micro-systems		X
Psychological & glandular tx		X
Treat bone/tendon level	X	
Balance body polarities for neuropathy and other degenerative conditions		X
Back pain relief	X	X
Sciatica relief	X	X
Effective tx for complex diseases	X	X
Scalp acupuncture	X	
Patient acceptance		X
Pediatric, veterinary tx		X
Tissue resonance and polarization effects		X
Neuropathy treatment	X	X

Advantages of Needle Therapy

The most notable advantage of needle acupuncture is bleeding therapies, which are often necessary for relieving pain and disease associated with stagnant blood conditions. According to several prominent Chinese master acupuncturists, bloodletting is the major key to resolving many chronic and recalcitrant conditions. Another power of needle acupuncture is the actual micro-trauma needles cause to tissue. Apparently the bio-chemical cascade triggered in the body by the mild to strong invasiveness of needles (depending on thickness of needles and manipulation techniques) account for much of the effectiveness of needle acupuncture. It also can produce the endorphin “high” which is a pleasant side-effect of acupuncture.

Another advantage of needling is the actual depth of insertion, the physiologic effect probably being the cascade of body reactions just mentioned. Needles can also direct the flow of Qi strongly.

Finally, retention of needles help drain tension from tightened and spastic muscles and fascial, and help to anchor the effects of various energetic repatterning effects of other therapies.

Advantages of Microcurrent and Light Therapies

Modern electronics have made several very effective meridian effects available that needle therapies simply cannot produce. These are listed in the chart above. The most notable are those facilitated by specific polarities, frequencies and color. Here are descriptions of the value of each:

Polarity - All objects in the physical universe that are larger than molecules are polarized, that is, they have a positive (Yang) and negative (Yin) aspect, and engender electro-magnetic field effects. The human body is no exception. When the body's natural polarities are intact pain and disease tend to be mild to moderate and its self-healing mechanisms work fairly well. Many of the most debilitating and degenerative diseases are associated with polarity reversals in the body, including cancer, MS, neuropathy and some cases of fibromyalgia.

While good needle therapies may trigger a balancing of nervous system and electrical functions in the body and thereby correct polarity reversals, that can be accomplished much more directly by correct application of positive and negative probes from a microcurrent device. As an example, treating migraines by placing a positive probe on painful head points and a negative probe on GB 41 on the foot can work very quickly to relieve pain.

Frequency - All physical objects also have characteristic vibration rates, or frequencies. Complex objects such as the human body are made up of multiple interacting frequency fields. Each Organ, gland, tissue, meridian and fluid of the body has characteristic frequencies. These frequencies have been mapped out by many researchers and practitioners. A law of physics states that if you can resonate with something, you can affect it. Therefore applying frequencies that resonate with diseased or painful tissue or energy systems can be powerfully therapeutic for it. In some cases the input will strengthen a weakened area (positive resonance), and in other cases it will cancel out inflammatory or toxic frequencies (destructive resonance).

Needles are poor at producing such targeted resonance effects, although the practitioner's energy flowing through the needle may have some of these effects. A good microcurrent device can produce specific frequencies that can greatly amplify the positive effects of acupuncture. Simply look up a beneficial frequency, dial it into the device and treat.

Color acu-therapy - A whole new frontier of acupuncture is the resonant effects of colors of light applied through acu-points. Modern patients increasingly require, in addition to addressing their chief complaints, treatments that reduce psychological stress, balance hormone function and nourish tissues in herb-like manner. Light acupuncture appears to produce these effects much more readily than needle acupuncture alone.

You can find several of my past articles in the Acupuncture Today archives that describe the therapeutic effects of healing colors of light. Cool (Yin) colors accentuate the cooling, calming effects of acupuncture while warm (Yang) color invigorate and tonify Organs, glands and Qi.

I have done and led extensive clinical trials into the combined use of microcurrent and light for enhanced acupuncture and tissue healing effects. I have named this set of techniques microlight therapy.

Combining Needle and Non-Needle Techniques

Why not double your clinical effectiveness? That is what can happen when you combine these two powerful methods. The anchoring, Qi releasing and micro-trauma effects of needles, combined with the resonance, polarizing and energizing effects of microcurrent and/or light can produce truly profound results with longer carry-over of therapeutic effects.

Here are some examples from my practice:

1. Sciatica treatment - I often needle Dr..Tan's Ling Ku combination on the hand opposite sciatic pain, and then apply polarized microcurrent probe or pad stimulation along the radicular pathway on the affected leg, using Purple light.
2. Peripheral neuropathy of lower extremities - Wonderful results have been produced by deep needling of sacral Liao¹ points and Shang-Baxie² foot points while applying polarized microcurrent pad therapies along the affected legs.
3. Abdominal pain, asthma – I use TCM diagnosis to determine affected Extraordinary Vessels and then needle the corresponding Master and Coupled points³. I then polarize those needles by touching polarized probe metal tips to the shaft or handles of the needles. Finally, I apply microlight Mu-Shu technique to the Front-Mu and Back-Shu points of the affected organs using colors of light that balance the Organ's function⁴.
4. Addiction relief – Apply needles to indicated auricular points, sometimes stimulated by microlight therapy, then use Mu-Shu method to heal and balance affected viscera and the lower Dan Tian area to calm and ground the patient.
5. Pain relief with chakra balancing – This involves using needles and/or microcurrent to relieve painful body areas and then using polarized microcurrent and light to energize a chakra energy center⁵. This is often combined with counseling, guided visualization or soul healing methods, the effects of each enhanced by intentional light stimulation of the chakra.

¹ Liao points are in the sacral foramen, and require 1.5 – 2” needles

² These are points needled in between the toes, and also require deep needling technique

³ For instructions for this form of meridian balancing, read Chapter 11 of my book Microcurrent Electro-Acupuncture

⁴ See my article in the Acupuncture Today archives at <http://www.acupuncturetoday.com/mpacms/at/article.php?id=31415>

⁵ For details on PNE chakra balance method, see my article at: <http://www.acupuncturetoday.com/mpacms/at/article.php?id=29058>
