

# 10 ELDERCARE TIPS FOR ACUPUNCTURISTS

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1. Schedule time for getting-to-know-you sessions. Elders may not read your website or literature and might prefer to meet with you in person to determine if you are the right practitioner for them. Also, many do not use email and may request physical copies of your paperwork and a detailed explanation of your policies and intake forms. Some elders shy away from phone conversations because of diminished hearing and may feel more comfortable meeting face to face.
2. Be flexible and understanding about last-minute cancellations or no-shows due to illness, transportation issues, or forgotten appointments. Simple acupuncture appointments can be difficult for patients who need to arrange rides, plan their bathroom breaks, or change clothing. Try to be compassionate about schedule interruptions. Overall, elders will be respectful of your time and will keep their appointments without interruption.
3. Provide patients with reminder cards or phone calls to help them remember their appointments. Also, be careful not to change the time and date of a treatment unless genuinely necessary. This can be confusing to a patient and may result in a no-show. Situations like these can create unnecessary embarrassment for the client, especially because many elders are worried about forgetting details like dates and times.

4. Streamline your intake so that patients are through with treatments in 45-60 minutes. Excessive questioning can be flustering to some older adults and may make them feel confused about your approach to treatment. Refine your observational skills to gather information you need without posing too many questions.

5. Offer to communicate with your patient's doctor about your diagnosis, course of treatment, and progress. Most older adults are under the care of a physician and will appreciate the professionalism of this gesture. Also, alerting MDs to what you can treat is a good way to generate referrals and create connections.

6. Schedule extra time before and after treatments to allow for undressing and redressing. Elders often have difficulty putting on socks and shoes and may require assistance with dressing. Always consider which treatment will require the least amount of disrobing to achieve maximum results.

7. Don't rush. Elders notice when you are in a hurry, and they may feel uncomfortable about their slower pace or complicated needs. By simplifying your approach, building extra time into your schedule, and being mindful of your own time management, elders will feel welcome in your office and receive the proven benefits of acupuncture in a safe and patient setting.

8. Leave room for conversation. You may be the only person with whom your patient discusses certain topics. When patients are being treated, let them know you are open to talking if they'd prefer to have a conversation. Never leave older, compromised adults alone on your acupuncture table. Even if they choose to rest rather than talk, sit quietly in the room to complete your paperwork. Many patients wake disoriented and may forget they are receiving acupuncture.

9. Learn to treat in a variety settings. Elders may be in wheelchairs, homebound, or on bed rest when you see them. Develop flexibility in your treatment protocols so you can help patients who are unable to be seen in your office. Your willingness to assist them at home, in their wheelchairs, or in a reclining chair will be appreciated and will not compromise the efficacy of your treatment.

10. Trust the medicine. Acupuncture is a powerful tool for helping the body regulate its natural healing abilities. Even in patients whose health is severely compromised, the body is always striving toward health. Believe that what you do helps, regardless of how complex the situation may appear. We know that acupuncture can assist with sleep, stimulate appetite, help with elimination, and offer pain relief—all of which make a significant impact on an elder's quality of life. Let the needles do the work.

## ABOUT US

Boulder Acupuncture and Herbs specializes in treating clients over 70 years old in Boulder, Colorado. Our treatments include private sessions, in-home appointments, and community-style acupuncture. We are committed to offering acupuncture as a way of helping isolation, chronic pain, and depression in our elder community.

## CONTACT

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