

# Using Facial and Scalp Acupuncture To Treat Neuromuscular Facial Conditions

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As a practitioner and instructor of facial rejuvenation acupuncture I have gotten many calls over the past 10 years from individuals seeking help for various conditions affecting the facial muscles, nerves, and overall function of the face.

My skills in needling the face, the facial muscles, utilizing facial cups and facial *Gua Sha* tools along with much training in scalp acupuncture have provided me with a framework to treat my patients. By incorporating these different modalities, I have been able to help patients regain lost motor functions in their face and to relieve conditions such as TMJ and the effects of stroke and MS.

There are many conditions, which affect the appearance and functionality of the facial muscles. Facial and scalp acupuncture, facial cupping and motor points are uniquely suited to address these conditions. The same points used to raise a saggy jowl or a furrowed brow can be used to treat a drooping eyelid such as with ptosis or bells palsy.

The same scalp points, which can help with nerve pain or motor issues can help with facial pain from trigeminal neuralgia or shingles on the face. Facial cupping and facial *Gua Sha* (when done with special facial cups and facial *Gua Sha* tools by a practitioner trained in facial cupping and facial *Gua Sha*) brings blood and *Qi* to the muscles of the face and has the potential to relieve TMJ and invigorate conditions affected by paralysis or weakness such as MS, or stroke.

Lastly, intramuscular needling techniques (which are invaluable in acupuncture facial rejuvenation for relaxing taught muscles which cause deep wrinkles) can be used to relax atrophied facial muscles as may happen with myasthenia gravis or ptosis.

Once a diagnosis has been made and a pattern has been established for treating the underlying condition, body points are inserted and then local points can be used either for their function (for example GB20 to disperse wind) or to stimulate a muscle group (for example ST4).

Scalp points for motor function can be particularly valuable to re-innervate the face after a stroke or Bells Palsy. Lastly, special intramuscular techniques are employed and motor points are stimulated (if necessary) to relax atrophied muscles. Once all needles are removed, facial cupping and *Gua Sha* can be used to further the effectiveness of the treatment.

Combining different modalities and techniques increases the effectiveness of the treatment and the rate at which your patient will see results. Knowing which muscle groups are affected and what the underlying cause for the condition is of utmost importance when planning a treatment of this type.

I like to see patients at least twice a week until their symptoms abate, and in the case of Bells Palsy, and stroke, the sooner the patient is seen the greater chance for success.

