



So how does it work? Melissa explains that from the Western medical perspective the possible physical changes come via complex neurological pathways involving cranial nerves and neurotransmitters. From a Chinese point of view, it's through the holograms represented in the microsystems of the face, which directly stimulate the internal organs and activate classical channels, which end or begin in the face. Melissa is keen to emphasize that these are all theories and are very difficult to prove or disprove.

The facial experience is probably best described as unique. After an in depth consultation about your health and lifestyle, Melissa asks you about your concerns about your skin and face. My personal facial obsession currently is based around trying to keep a taut jaw line (and avoid jowls) something I fear has already started to happen! However if I had any hesitation about the effects of the treatment, Melissa's before and after pictures put all those concerns to rest. The images of patient she had worked with over ten sessions were staggering, the acupuncture had erased at least twenty years from the woman's face.

So how does it feel? The process of putting the thirty or so needles in your face is not really painful, though a couple of more sensitive points were a little bit sharper, but this was a very short-lived discomfort. The theory is that wrinkles and fine lines are reduced by improving facial tone and the production of collagen fibres, stimulated by the expertly precise placement of the needles. This in turn, improves the skin elasticity by nourishing the blood of the liver and promoting facial blood and lymph circulation. The needles are then stimulated gently in the

face before you are left to relax for about forty minutes, giving the needles time to do their magic.

The second part of the treatment feels a bit more 'traditional' and involves lymphatic drainage, massaging the face, neck, shoulders and the top of the back with oils chosen for my specific health concerns and is designed to assist with the clearing of toxins and to help your body fight infection and the lymph system to work effectively. It's blissfully relaxing and I am sure that I must have dropped off at least one time while Melissa worked on me.

How did I look after? Well, I am always less interested in that, as I always feel that your skin always tends to look more 'glowy', brighter and more pumped up after a treatment. What does interest me is what happens later, and a few weeks on and I do feel that my skin is better. It's less reactive and prone to breakouts (my typical stress response) the usual few spots that tend to crop up around my jaw line don't seem to happen. What's more impressive is that during the consultation I mentioned that I have always suffered from painful periods that sometimes left me bed bound for a day. Melissa had told me that there was a really good acupuncture point she could use on me for that during the treatment. I can't say my period was totally pain-free but it was much more manageable. Would I do it again? Absolutely! The pursuit of a pain free and non-invasive alternative to botox or fillers is definitely worth a few pins and needles here and there.

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