

“The Relationship Between Insomnia and the Autonomic Nervous System, and How Acupuncture Supports Natural Recovery”

Struggling to fall asleep? Waking up several times during the night?

If these issues sound familiar, your insomnia may be closely linked to an imbalance in your autonomic nervous system. In this post, I'll explain how the autonomic nervous system affects sleep—and how acupuncture can help restore balance and improve insomnia.

Why Insomnia Often Comes from Autonomic Nervous System Imbalance

The autonomic nervous system controls your body's functions automatically. It has two main branches:

- **Sympathetic nervous system (active mode):** dominant during daytime or stress
- **Parasympathetic nervous system (relaxation mode):** dominant at night and during rest

Normally, the parasympathetic system takes over in the evening, helping your body relax and prepare for sleep. But modern habits and stressors can easily disrupt this natural rhythm.

Common Causes of Autonomic Imbalance

- Stress and anxiety
- Long hours on smartphones or computers (blue light exposure)
- Irregular lifestyle patterns
- Overwork and accumulated sleep deprivation

When these factors keep the sympathetic system active at night, you may feel “tired but unable to sleep.”

The Vicious Cycle of Insomnia

Insomnia doesn't just cause fatigue—it further disrupts the autonomic nervous system.

- Persistent tiredness
- Irritability and increased anxiety
- Difficulty concentrating
- Lowered immune function

This creates a cycle where insomnia and autonomic imbalance feed into each other.

How Acupuncture Helps Regulate the Autonomic Nervous System

Acupuncture gently stimulates specific points on the body to support natural balance. For insomnia, acupuncture may offer several benefits:

1. Restores Autonomic Balance

Encourages parasympathetic dominance, helping the body shift into relaxation mode.

2. Improves Circulation

Better blood flow reduces muscle tension and helps the mind settle.

3. Reduces Stress

Stimulates the release of calming neurotransmitters such as serotonin.

Acupuncture Points Helpful for Insomnia

Here are some points you can use for simple self-care:

- **Baihui (GV20)**: top of the head — promotes emotional stability
- **Shenmen (HT7)**: wrist — eases anxiety and nervous tension
- **Sanyinjiao (SP6)**: above the inner ankle — supports hormonal balance

Apply gentle pressure—slow, comfortable stimulation is enough.

Recommended Treatment Duration for Fundamental Constitution Improvement

To achieve not only temporary symptom relief but also long-term resilience against recurring discomfort—in other words, true **fundamental constitution improvement**—it's generally recommended to continue treatment for a certain period of time.

A common guideline is **once a week for about three months**. This is based on the fact that the body's cells take roughly **three months** to complete a renewal cycle.

Receiving regular treatments during this period helps stabilize the autonomic nervous system, allowing the body to internalize this balanced state and gradually strengthen its natural healing capacity.

After that, as symptoms become more stable, it's typical to **gradually extend the intervals between visits**.