



PIN THE ZONE

Acupuncture can increase fertility naturally – and also boosts IVF conception rates by 50 per cent, says BETH TYRRELL

being independent and having careers.

"By the time they come to me, many women are quite literally in a state of panic because they haven't conceived. She'll tell me that her friend was only trying for three months, and I have to ask – how do you know? Were you there? You can't believe everything you hear. Women are under enormous pressure with work and money stresses, and on top of that there is huge stigma attached to infertility. I can't tell you how many patients I have had who were undergoing IVF secretly and never told anyone, even after their baby was born."

So the first acupuncture treatment is just to calm things down



GETTING TO THE POINT: Acupuncture can be so beneficial to the body

THE body has its own wisdom," says Karen Costin. "It has its own ability to heal. When you have a physical or emotional problem we have to ask Why? What is happening that is blocking the body's natural ability to be well?" Karen is a Five Point Acupuncturist with eighteen years experience treating couples with fertility problems. She works with women and men to increase natural health and fertility, and she works with couples who are planning or undergoing IVF treatment. German researchers have found Acupuncture increased conception rates in IVF by almost 50 per cent.

When it comes to the causes of infertility, Karen tells Zero to Seven: "People listen to their cars more than to their bodies, and fix little problems as they arise. If only we listened to our bodies and noticed when the body and spirit aren't working properly: when we start getting ratty, or we are exhausted at certain times of the day, or our periods are out of whack.

"People should take more responsibility for their own health. Just as we fix our cars as each little problem arises, we should mind our bodies and seek balance for each little niggle."

Acupuncture is ideally suited to address these imbalances and restore the body's natural self healing ability. Karen explains: "Acupuncture is over 3,500 years old, it contains a wealth of wisdom which keeps being proven in modern research done all over the world. By comparison, western medicine is only 200 years old."

When a woman comes to Karen with concerns about her fertility, Karen starts her on a structured plan of action and a battery of tests, including follicle tracking. But the very first treatment is nearly always to calm the patient down, says Karen. She tells Zero to Seven: "There is real hysteria about fertility these days. Women are made to feel so guilty if they have not had children by the time they are in their mid to late thirties, it is like we are attacked for the cardinal sin of

and de-stress. This in itself can have some very fundamental benefits, says Karen – as simple as getting your sex life going again. Karen says: "People tell me they have been trying for a year, and I ask does that mean they've been having sex every day for a year? The answer is always 'Oh No! I'm far too exhausted for that!' It's amazing how many people are prepared to spend ten grand on IVF but they aren't prepared to have sex more often."

Karen is not being flippant when she says people aren't having enough sex. It can easily happen that a couple repeatedly miscalculate their fertile days, and part of her service is to refer patients for tests to find out exactly when they ovulate. Other patients have physical health issues that need to be

addressed and treated before conception can take place.

Another taboo issue that arises in Karen's practice is the effect of the Pill (oral contraceptive) on fertility. Officially, the Pill does not affect fertility, even when taken over many years. Karen says: "That's rubbish. Some people do come off the pill and get pregnant – but there are many women who just don't. If you hope to have children in the future you need to consider this carefully. There are other forms of contraception – you can use condoms."



**FINDING
BALANCE:**
*Acupuncture
restores the
body's self-
healing
abilities*