



Cleveland Clinic

# Integrative Medicine for Athletes

Cleveland Clinic's Center for Integrative Medicine offers complementary, or non-traditional, medical care. Athletes and active individuals being treated by Cleveland Clinic Sports Health experts may also benefit from these services. Below are answers to questions you may have:

How does [INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE](#) help athletes?

Athletes and active individuals can be challenged by conditions such as tendonitis, arthritis, seasonal allergies, migraines, asthma, chronic fatigue and hypertension. When coupled with standard treatment, the integrative medicine techniques described below can help you by:

- Reducing pain and swelling and improving circulation
- Increasing range of motion, strength and stamina
- Speeding recovery from injuries
- Preventing injury and re-injury
- Enhancing relaxation, focus and athletic performance

How does [ACUPUNCTURE](#) help athletes?

Acupuncture is the application of a centuries-old healing tradition to today's athletes. Hair-thin needles are gently inserted into the skin at special points that stimulate or calm certain areas of your body. Regular acupuncture treatments can keep your body in balance, which may make you less susceptible to injury or illness.

How does [MASSAGE THERAPY](#) help athletes?

Massage therapists do more than manipulate your muscles. They can manually move fluids to loosen your joints, reduce swelling and make movement easier. This can help to increase circulation, which moves nutrients through the body and may speed healing from injuries.



### How do **HOLISTIC THERAPY, HYPNOSIS** and **GUIDED IMAGERY** help athletes?

The goal of holistic psychotherapy is to achieve the deepest healing possible by fully integrating body, mind and spirit. Holistic therapy sessions may involve hypnosis. They can help athletes grappling with problems such as stress, depression or anxiety, and may help to improve performance.

Guided imagery, also called visualization, mindfulness training and mind-body coaching, can ground you in the present. These techniques can give you a sense of calm and focus that help you to stay “in the zone.” This can increase confidence, consistency and athletic success, and quiet any inner turmoil that interferes with peak performance. Research shows that using visualization to rehearse successful sports performance is nearly as effective as actual practice.

### How can **REIKI** help athletes?

Reiki is a complementary natural healing technique. It can be an extremely relaxing experience that supports well-being in your body, mind and emotions, which can enhance sports performance. Reiki practitioners do not physically manipulate body tissues; their hands may touch you lightly or not at all. Reiki is gentle, noninvasive and has no side effects. The energy used in Reiki may feel like soothing waves of warmth coming from the practitioner’s hands.

## About the **Center for Integrative Medicine**

As part of Cleveland Clinic’s Wellness Institute, this center offers evidence-based complementary approaches to prevention and healing. Integrative medicine physicians, acupuncturists, holistic therapists, massage therapists and Reiki practitioners offer treatments that complement traditional healthcare regimens.

For more information about Center for Integrative Medicine services, visit [clevelandclinic.org/integrativemedicine](https://clevelandclinic.org/integrativemedicine) or call **216.986.HEAL (4325)**.