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Stressing a point: Dr Stephen Paine says that dealing with stress "is one of the most dramatic achievements of acupuncture and it is probably the most satisfying thing I do".

PICTURE BY JOHN WESTHROP

and it is a matter of managing and releasing them.

"When you help to harmonise the body's emotional response and do balancing treatments that dissipate tension and release natural endorphins into the system, the effects are immediate," he said.

"You notice this very often with the first treatment, when people feel significantly better. It is very much like an induced meditation, which helps the mind to descend to a deeper level of relaxation. When you use acupunc-

ture you send signals throughout the body which help the various systems to return to normalcy and restore the deep blood flow to the organs so you get a better functioning of all of them.

"The body knows what to do already, the acupuncture just removes tensions that may prevent its efficient functioning.

"The genius of the ancient Chinese was they devised ways of finding out what specific points on the outside of the body would have a direct effect on the internal organs. By mapping these

points out over hundreds of years they got the information organised so they could get repeated and demonstrable results.

"So acupuncturists are able to direct the body into doing what it wants to do naturally and to restore the balance quickly and safely in a way that can be sustained," he said.

Most find one treatment gives considerable relief, but he usually recommends three to 10 treatments for strengthening and to buffer the patient against future problems.