

Discover

NADA Ear Acupuncture

Sarah Kallend



If you had a bad back and told a friend you were going to try acupuncture to see if it might help, I very much doubt that they would give you a look of astonishment. Acupuncture has been a treatment option in this part of the Western world for more than 50 years now and here in the UK, you might even be offered it by the NHS.

What about Micro Acupuncture? Or NADA Ear Acupuncture?

Acupuncture has been around for thousands of years and is at the heart of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Western medicine began to explore its use in the 1970's, initially for pain management. As studies multiplied and became more diverse, its ability to impact a wide range of conditions has been acknowledged.

Enter The NADA Protocol, NADA, standing for National Acupuncture Detoxification Association. It's a relatively recent addition to the acupuncture family in global terms and developed in New York in the 1970's right at the vanguard of acupuncture becoming adopted into Western medicine.

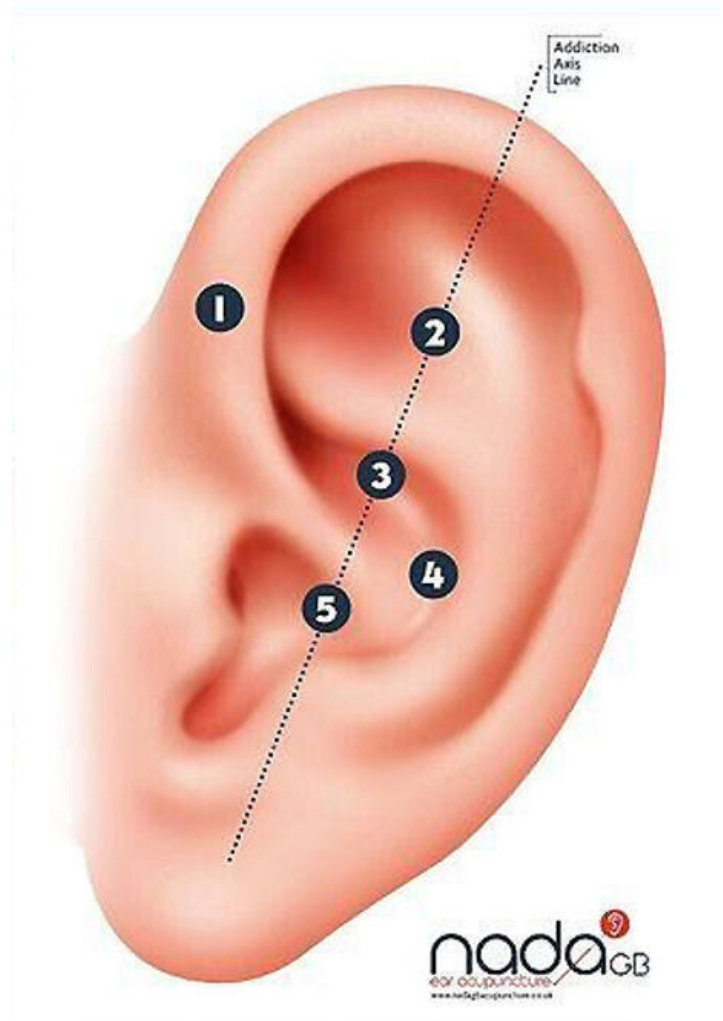
What is NADA Ear Acupuncture?

It's a Micro Acupuncture treatment: a subset of Auricular Acupuncture, a specialised branch of acupuncture that exclusively treats the ear. In much the same way as Reflexology treats the feet as a microcosm representing the entire body, so to, as conventional acupuncture treats the full body from points all over the body, Auricular Acupuncture treats the ear as a nexus of interconnected body parts, organs, and functions.

The 'map' of the ear used in Auricular Acupuncture is vast. The premise is simple: that stimulating specific points on the ear can instigate positive responses in the full body, providing relief for an array of physical and mental conditions. The NADA Protocol focuses on only 5 of these points, always the same 5, and this makes it simple to learn and also to experience. Maybe we could call it Micro Micro Acupuncture?

NADA began in the world of detox, but is today used in a huge variety of settings and to support a wide and growing range of conditions.

The story begins in the 1970s, the era of the heroin epidemic in New York. At Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx, Dr. Michael O. Smith and his team, were valiantly attempting to hold back the tide and managing a huge programme moving addicts from Heroin to Methadone. The secondary stage of becoming totally 'clean' without the support of Methadone was a new and challenging problem.



Inspired by some positive studies from China suggesting that auricular acupuncture could alleviate substance cravings, the team at Lincoln explored various protocols to assess whether ear acupuncture could be used to alleviate withdrawal symptoms, diminish cravings, and provide a comforting path to recovery.

By the middle of the decade The NADA Protocol had been established as a gentle, non-invasive method to support detox. The Lincoln Hospital is still using NADA to this day, as are thousands of Detox Facilities all around the world (40+ countries), including many parts of the NHS Drug and Alcohol Service.

In 1985, NADA as an organisation, was formed to advocate for this new protocol and set training standards. By this time it had already crept outside of the Detox remit and was

being used to provide emotional and physical relief to patients in the Aids / HIV epidemic. In the '90s, NADA Ear Acupuncture extended its reach to disaster relief and trauma recovery, where the ease of treating people in groups and without the need for a common language, or in fact words of any kind, has made it both accessible and powerful.

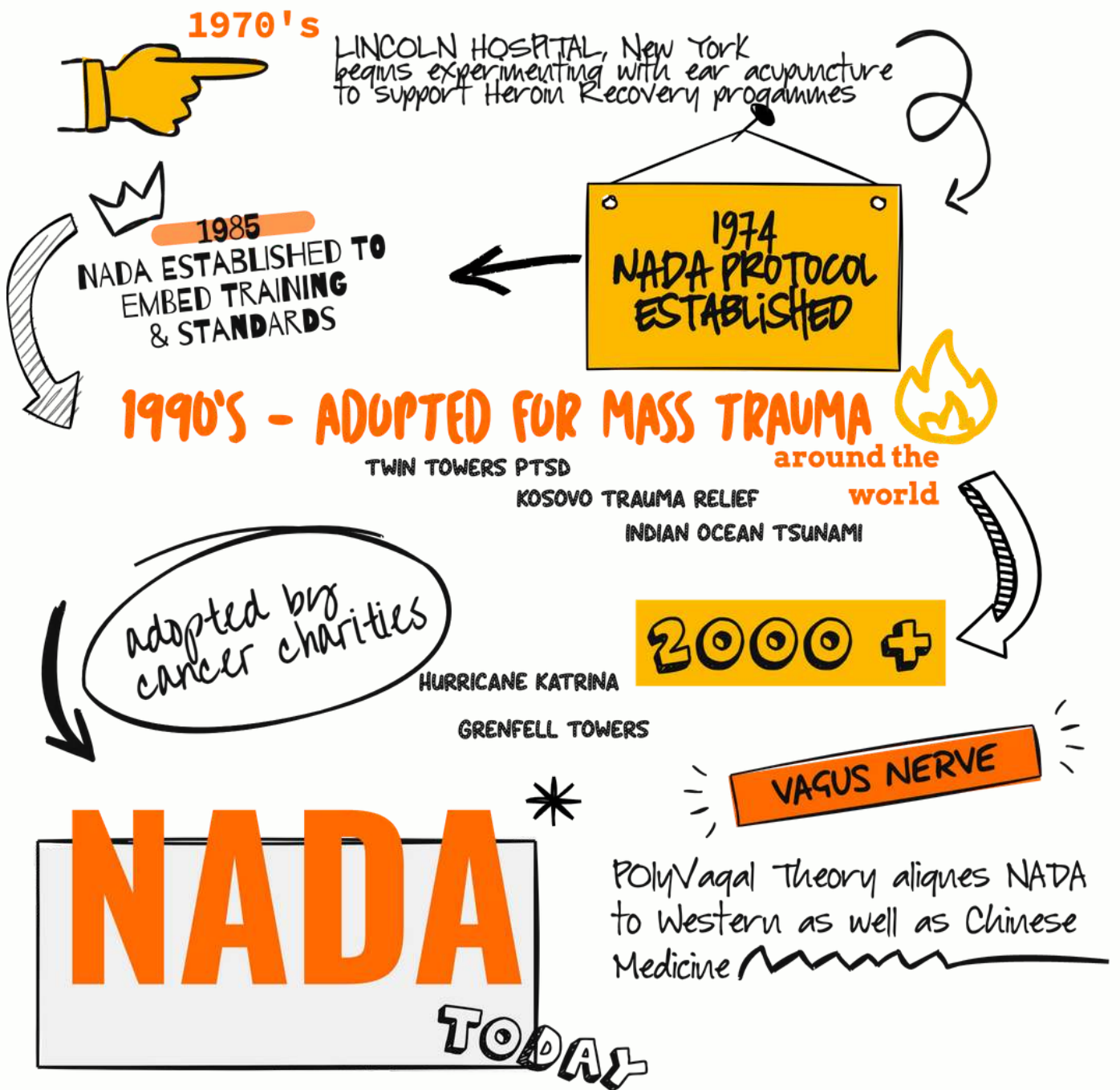
By the 2000s, NADA had evolved beyond addiction and trauma settings to become a versatile tool in holistic healthcare. Today this treatment is offered

in the UK by Breast and Prostate Cancer Charities, in many parts of the Prison Service (to aid detox and for its calming effect) as well as in regional Drug & Alcohol Services.

Outside the UK, in recent years there have been trials in a Scandinavian Psychiatric Hospital to use NADA, not just as an adjunct therapy, but as an alternative to antipsychotic drugs.



FEEL
BETTER



This is not some 'airy fairy' feel good pampering therapy: it's powerful stuff.

NADA in Practice

1. NADA practitioners undergo specific training for this protocol and each year are reassessed to keep their credentials current and their training up to date. If you see a full body, or auricular acupuncturist it's likely they will feel comfortable offering you this particular protocol, but they are not directly assessed by NADA, and may well offer you alternatives to treat any conditions you are looking for support with.



2. There is only one type of acupuncture needle approved for use in a NADA treatment. They are single use, sterilised tiny, stubby needles with much longer orange 'handles'. They are extremely fine and much shorter than standard acupuncture needles. Look for the orange handles to know that it's NADA. Often they are referred to as 'points' rather than needles.

3. These points are inserted into 5 positions in the ear and usually both ears will be treated in this way. Your practitioner will instruct you to breathe in immediately before they insert each needle and then insert it on your out breath. It simply feels more comfortable that way.

4. With your ten 'points' in place, traditionally you would sit in restful silence for 30 to 40 minutes. Many people welcome the stillness and silence and it certainly can feel calming. For some people however, sitting still AND in silence is not something they are willing to consider. Trauma, ADHD, or Anxiety often generates racing or intrusive thoughts and sitting in silence might simply be too hard or even counter productive. And so the setting and silence (or not) may depend on your personal health, whether you are receiving NADA one to one, or in a group, where you are receiving it and also the skillset and preferences of your Practitioner.

5. At the end of the session, your 'points' are removed swiftly and usually with no discomfort.

Does it hurt and is it safe?

Good question and the answer, like many annoying answers, is that it depends. Firstly it depends on what you call pain: not as uncomfortable as having an injection for sure. Others describe it as a tiny 'pinch' when the points are inserted and this is only when you



feel anything at all. What you feel, or don't feel varies from treatment to treatment, often from one ear to another on the same day!

NADA is minimally invasive: the points are sterilised and single use so there is no risk of infection from equipment. You'll be given an anti-bacterial wipe to cleanse your ears before treatment begins and that ensures that the area is

clean of cosmetics or other products. The insertion points are miniscule and therefore so to is the risk of infection.

Your NADA Practitioner will check your health history and whilst there are certain conditions they need to be aware of, other than if you had broken or inflamed skin in the ear itself, there is nothing that stands in the way of anyone having treatment.

If you are pregnant, whilst full body acupuncturists can offer support in the first trimester, it's recommended that you pause any NADA sessions until the second.

NADA from the perspective of Western & Chinese Medicine

Traditional Chinese Medicine views the ear as a miniature universe of meridians and energy pathways. Acupuncture seen through this lens, seeks to reset any imbalance and create a harmony throughout your body. In this tradition, organs in the body have a pairing with an emotion.

Emotional Pairings:

Kidneys / Fear (NADA point 3)

Liver / Anger (NADA point 4)

Lung / Grief & Loss (NADA point 5)

From a Western medicine point of view, we understand that a NADA treatment impacts on the Vagus Nerve. This is the primary nerve of the Parasympathetic part of the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS), the part we're in when resting, relaxing or feeling at ease. The Sympathetic part of the ANS is commonly referred to as 'Fight or Flight' and also includes the states of 'Freeze' and 'Fawn' (an aspect of people pleasing). These 'Sympathetic' states equip us to manage danger or threat in the moment. When we get 'stuck' in this side of our nervous system the body gets overloaded with chemical cocktails which are inappropriate for non threat situations. Many people may even find themselves sleeping in this Hyper Vigilant state and not surprisingly wake feeling fatigued and unrefreshed.

The name Vagus Nerve is misleading because actually it's a collection of over 100,000 individual nerves . The list of issues that may be supported by NADA are all issues that are either fully or in part influenced by the Vagus. The term 'Vagal Tone' is increasingly being used to describe the health of the Vagus Nerve. NADA is a safe and effective approach to



treating the body that fits easily alongside Western approaches. Worldwide over 25,000 healthcare workers are trained NADA Practitioners.

How Might NADA Help?

Each individual responds differently to this powerful treatment. Research studies (of which there are many) are based on 6 to 12 treatments and therefore it's suggested that people complete a course of 6 to 8 weekly treatments to observe the optimum response for them personally. However it isn't unusual for improvements in mood or sleep to be noticed from the very first treatment. Some complete a course of treatments to help them over a short term issue, such as symptoms coming from cancer treatment and do not need further sessions. Others then adopt this therapy as 'essential maintenance'. People who are unable to complete a course of treatments, often book themselves in for NADA as occasional respite from busy or stressed lives.

Since the 1980's health tech firms have been exploring surgically implanting devices to stimulate the Vagus Nerve to provide improvements in physical and emotional health. Rather late to the party, having concluded that these procedures are expensive as well as intrusive, they're now running studies on stimulating the Vagus via the ear externally and concluding that it is an effective alternative. It's hard to imagine how they've remained ignorant about NADA given how globally accepted the Protocol is!

Issues that can be helped or supported:

NADA is not a replacement for medical treatment and you should consult your GP if you have specific health concerns. The list that follows is not comprehensive, nor should it set anyone's expectations about how they personally might respond to NADA. The short story is that if you have issues related to the nervous system you may find relief using this therapy. With mental health awareness, autoimmune conditions, and chronic illnesses sadly on the rise, it is to be hoped that more people and health care professionals will become aware of this powerful treatment. This guide has been written to aid that process of education and now you've read it, you may decide to try it for yourself or to suggest it to others.

- Detox (any substance)
- Hot flushes
- Sleep
- Anxiety / Stress Management
- Cancer treatment or post care
- IBS
- Tinnitus
- Low Mood
- Chronic pain conditions
- Autoimmune conditions
- Stress related skin conditions
- Long Covid
- Stroke Rehabilitation



Case Studies

Debra has generally very poor health. With a history of mini strokes, high blood pressure, Fibromyalgia, and Epilepsy, she felt some sense of relief immediately after her first NADA treatment. By the end of her sixth she reported feeling physically, mentally and emotionally better. She describes managing stressful



situations with a newfound ease, a reduction in pain, a calming of her Diverticulitis, improved mood and a huge reduction in the fits or episodes (which had been almost a daily occurrence) and a “clearer, calm head”. Debra has NADA along with her daughter Kirsty, who herself reports that she’s now experiencing better sleep, no more IBS flares and a new sense of ease in the middle of a particularly difficult time.

Jonathan reflects on his experience with NADA, “ When I first heard about NADA I wasn’t sure what to think of it. It sounded too good to be true, but I gave it a go and am delighted at how effective it’s been at calming my anxiety and stopping my headaches. I’m now hooked: it’s a wonderfully simple, necessary and regular relief for me, I highly recommend it to all”





Marcella has a busy, stressful life and turned to NADA to see whether it could help reduce the Hot Flushes that were making her days uncomfortable and her nights disturbed. After just 3 sessions she was already noticing a reduction in their intensity and frequency and by the 6th she was struggling to recall when her last one was! She's also aware that she is feeling much calmer, " I keep on finding myself thinking, why did that thing not bother me? Why do I feel so chilled, because it certainly isn't that life has got easier. The only difference is NADA".

Sharon was plagued by tinnitus and decided to try a series of NADA treatments, by the end of which she'd almost forgotten why she'd begun because the tinnitus was gone! She now has a monthly treatment and says, "I always feel so relaxed, content and lighter after a session". The tinnitus occasionally makes an appearance during times of particular stress, but it's no longer a constant source of upset and irritation. Now her partner Nigel has discovered the benefits of NADA and they come for treatment together.



Another **Nigel** says, "I came to Sarah when I tried everything else over the years, somethings helped for a short time, but my wife and sister tell me I'm now back to who I was, rather than stress and anxiety taking over. My logical self is back and it helps with the stresses and strains of everyday life. Life feels somehow less complicated and it's helped me see more clearly". Nigel's treatment plan combined NADA with HeartSpeak, a stress reduction therapy.



Author

This Guide to NADA Ear Acupuncture has been written and produced by UK NADA Practitioner Sarah Kallend. Sarah is a Mental and Emotional Health Therapist practising in Derbyshire. In 2020 whilst undergoing treatment for Breast Cancer, her NHS Oncologist introduced her to the NADA Protocol, suggesting that it may help to alleviate the Hot and Cold Flushes that were a majorly debilitating aspect of treatment.

Sadly due to the Pandemic, the local cancer charity had to suspend their NADA programme so it became frustratingly out of reach. Being out of active treatment by the time it was reinstated, Sarah decided to train as a Practitioner herself, acting as her own first patient and thanks to NADA is free from soaked bed sheets and showers in the middle of the night.

The Case Studies detailed in this Guide are all clients who have worked directly with Sarah. She offers NADA one to one and also in group settings: (currently in Chesterfield, the Monday night NADA Club combines NADA with Guided Relaxation). Learn more at www.sarahkallend.com or reach Sarah at sarah@sarahkallend.com

