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**SURPRISED** Chantal Cooke tells of her acupuncture success

## Needles to say, it cured back pain

**YEARS of back pain was alleviated by acupuncture for book publicist Chantal Cooke, 46. Here, she sings its praises.**

“ A CHILDHOOD fall down stairs, aged 11, left me prone to bouts of back pain. Although I was active, I was always aware of my back and had to be careful to avoid doing anything that would cause it to seize up.

A few years ago, simply getting off my bike caused my back to just go - I could barely stand up, never mind walk.

Over the years, I'd been to my GP, who told me to take anti-inflammatory painkillers, had a back X-ray privately and had my pelvis realigned by an osteopath.

Although that helped, I still had flare-ups. I was resigned to taking painkillers and having sports massages to try to alleviate the muscle spasms and, when my back was good, doing Pilates to try to strengthen my core muscles.

Then two years ago, I read about acupuncture and decided I had nothing to lose so I contacted an acupuncturist.

During the first session, she inserted fine needles in my lower back and, while it didn't hurt, neither did it make any difference to my back pain. But I felt better in myself - I had more energy and slept better.

Realising that you can't expect miracles after just one visit, I continued - paying about £50 for an hour session.

By the fifth session, there was a noticeable difference.

The following morning, I got out of bed easily - without creaking. I could move around better and even wiggle my hips and bend over.

After three more sessions, I felt like a normal person and could forget about my back.

I was so delighted - I summoned up the courage to try horse riding again for the first time in decades.

Unfortunately, a year ago I fell off my horse, jarring my back badly. I had acupuncture again and fully attribute the speed of my recovery to the acupuncture sessions.

I now go back every six months for maintenance.

■ **To find an approved acupuncturist, visit [acupuncture.org.uk](http://acupuncture.org.uk)**