

HAGYARD

Equine Medical Institute

Acupuncture

“It does not matter whether medicine is old or new, so long as it brings about a cure. It matters not whether theories be eastern or western, so long as they prove to be true.”

Dr. Jen Hsou Lin, DVM, PhD

This quote underscores how integrating principles of Western medicine and Traditional Chinese Medicine can provide the best treatment for an animal. Acupuncture is derived from the Latin words *acus*, meaning “needle,” and *pungere*, meaning “to pierce or puncture.” Acupuncture is defined as a technique of inserting needles into specific locations on the body for treating certain painful conditions. These specific locations are stimulated and alter various biochemical and physiological parameters to achieve a desired effect. The use of acupuncture for treating ailments in animals is thousands of years old. The first veterinary textbook was written in 650 B.C. and was based on acupuncture. Now, acupuncture is the medical treatment of choice for 25 – 30 percent of the world’s population. There are approximately 1000 veterinary acupuncturists that practice in the United States today.

Acupuncture addresses the whole animal and does not simply treat the symptoms. The neuroendocrine responses achieved by needle insertion are the same ones the body uses to regulate normal physiologic processes. Acupuncture stimulates a specific point on a horse’s body to achieve a therapeutic effect. The horse has 361 acupoints. Acupuncture points lie along meridians or pathways of major peripheral nerves. They correspond to known neural structures. The insertion of acupuncture needles causes little or no discomfort. Acupuncture can be done with tiny needles, hypodermic needles, lasers, electrical device, moxabustion, and Vitamin B12 injected into the acupoint. A veterinarian will perform an acupuncture examination before deciding what points to treat and what modalities to use.



Photo courtesy of Lee Thomas

Acupuncture can be used for any disease or lameness. Some examples of conditions that respond well to acupuncture are lameness, back pain, navicular syndrome, uterine fluid, infertility, libido problems, diarrhea, some forms of colic, string halt, corneal eye ulcers, and many others. If you want to consult with an acupuncturist for your horse, you should use a licensed veterinarian that is certified in acupuncture. For more information, contact the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society. www.ivas.org

CLINICAL APPLICATIONS OF ACUPUNCTURE

o **Why recommend acupuncture?**

- It is proven effective for certain conditions
- The client requests acupuncture
- It is used by approximately 30% of the world population
- All other modalities have failed or been ineffective

o **Who to get to do an acupuncture examination or treatment?**

- A veterinarian that has been certified in a veterinary acupuncture course
- www.ivas.org or the Chi Institute

o **When to recommend acupuncture?**

- Preferably early in the case
- In horses and clients that are accepting of the procedure
- Peripheral neuropathies such as radial nerve paralysis, facial nerve paralysis
- Lameness cases: navicular, string halt, degenerative joint disease in any joint
- Back soreness
- Diarrhea
- Gastrointestinal ulceration
- Ophthalmic conditions
- Reproductive disorders: anestrus, retained placenta, pregnancy maintenance, uterine fluid, urine pooling, uterine tone, uterine infection, behavioural estrus, ovulation, cryptorchidism, reduced libido problems, etc
- Respiratory conditions: EIPH, Heaves



Photo courtesy of Lee Thomas