

Equine Sports Therapy

Acupressure

By Kristen Giglio



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Did you know that acupressure- Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has been practiced and affective for many ailments for thousands of years? But with the introduction of Western Medicine, TCM has been lost in treating many problems. Acupressure is a non-invasive treatment that contributes and affects your horse's overall health and well-being. It has the ability to reduce pain and swelling, relieve muscle spasms, helps to increase injury recovery by removing toxins and increasing blood flow, stimulates body's healing process by clearing energy congestion, builds immune system response. In TCM the body's energy flow, called chi, flows thru the body in the form of channels called meridians. There

are six main paired meridians and each consists of one yang-positive and one yin-negative meridian.

Yang

Large Intestine, Bladder, Gall Bladder, Small Intestine, Triple Heater, Stomach

YIN

Lung, Kidney, Liver, Heart, Pericardium, Spleen

If there is an imbalance present, or blocked chi, pathological conditions become present. Yang imbalances occur with acute conditions, are classified as dry/hot and the corresponding organs are hollow. Yin imbalances occur with chronic ailments, are opposite to Yang; being wet/cold and the associated organs are solid. The important aspect to remember about TCM, when referencing to an organ, it is not necessarily referring to the

organ directly, but more as the organ as a "whole." The entire system. The meridian systems linked to the organ's pathways are most commonly the problem, not the actual organ. For example the following paired meridians usually correspond with these problems.

YIN

LUNG

respiratory weakness
knee problems
dull hair and skin

SPLEEN

colic – acute/chronic
weakened immune system
muscle imbalances
digestive disorders
stocking up

HEART

cardiovascular imbalances
shoulder problems

KIDNEY

bone weaknesses
dull hair coat
reproductive problems
periodontal disease

PERICARDIUM

irregular heart function
chest weakness
chronic behavioral - problems

LIVER

stiff/cramped muscles
eye problems
digestive problems
heat cycles irregularity
hoof problems
joint weakness

Yang

LARGE INTESTINE

constipation/diarrhea
respiratory conditions
restricted/tight neck muscles
skin problems
weakened immune system

STOMACH

digestive disorders
eye problems
stifle weakness
TMJ pain/tension
lethargy

SMALL INTESTINE

foreleg problems
TMJ pain/tension
energy depletion

BLADDER

UTI dysfunction
lower back ailments
hock problems
general body pain
bone/joint problems

TRIPLE HEATER

ear problems
neck imbalances
navicular weaknesses
fore quarter lameness

GALL BLADDER

arthritis
hock problems
neck imbalances
joint problems
overall muscle stiffness

Each meridian has a pathway that it follows along the body and one imbalance along this pathway does cause weakness. But only if the weakness continues to be present and not treated allowing the symptoms to get extremely serious does the actual associated organ will start to weaken. The acupressure I use and find most affective is Ting Point Therapy. Ting Points are the beginning/ending points of each meridian. These points are located along the coronary band of both the front and hind hooves. They are positioned equally around the circumference of the coronary band. There are twelve points, six on the foreleg and six on the hind leg. The points from the foreleg, lateral (outside) to medial (inside) the cranial (front) of the coronary band are Small Intestine, Triple Heater and Large Intestine, and on the caudal (back) aspect of the coronary band

are Heart, Pericardium and Lung. On the hind leg, cranial surface, lateral to medial; Gall Bladder, Stomach and Liver. On the caudal surface; Bladder, Kidney and Spleen. Ting Points that are not balanced usually present themselves as either spongy and warm, or hollow and dry to the touch. A swollen or bumpy Ting Point indicates an excess or acute problem. A pitted depression is commonly indicative of a chronic situation. Ting Points are powerful diagnostic tools and when stimulated and cleared help to balance the corresponding meridians and energy flow. By using acupressure- Ting Point Therapy, as a treatment tool it helps aid the body's natural response to healing injuries and overall body weaknesses. As an Equine Therapist I feel the benefits are countless, as all the horses that I treat have a had an unbelievable response which aids me in stimulating your horse's natural healing process.

For any questions or comments on my column please e-mail me at, kristen@acetherapy.ca.
