

Equine Acupressure: Easy DIY Method

Acupressure Overview

Acupressure can be helpful in relieving pain, increasing circulation and for aiding in healing of certain issues and diseases. The great thing about acupressure is that it can be learned in a relatively short amount of time and be successfully used in conjunction with many other integrative wellness modalities for your horse or other animal companions. Some common uses:

- Arthritis
- Founder
- Allergies
- Stimulate hunger/thirst
- Anxiety and stress
- Colic

How it Works

The ancient Chinese developed system of active points stimulation over 5,000 years ago that we still use today called acupressure. The active points are located on lines throughout the body defined as meridians. The ancient Chinese believed that life energy, chi, flows through these meridians. In a healthy horse the energy flow through meridians is unobstructed and blockages of flow results in an illness and/or pain. The Chinese believed that acupressure can clear the meridians and improve the flow of energy.



Jenny lining up to apply acupressure to the master point of the horse's hind end.

Stimulation of acupressure can lead to increased release of endorphins and increase circulation to the area it is applied. Endorphins are the horse's natural painkiller and circulation carries oxygen and nutrients to the body. Thus acupressure can help relax a horse and support the normalization of body's functions. It is not a cure or replacement for proper medical care, only a compliment to it.

Acupressure Guidelines

Though this is typically an un-invasive and easy technique to learn, there are some guidelines and cautions to note before applying or using acupressure.

- Do not apply acupressure on a pregnant mare without professional guidance. Some pressure points can cause abortions or early deliveries.
- Acupressure should not be done on areas that the horse exhibits extreme sensitivity.
- Do not apply acupressure directly to areas that can be aggravated; bruises, wounds, cuts, damaged tissue. It may be beneficial to do acupressure in distal locations or the surrounding areas but applying pressure directly to sore/tender areas will be painful and may cause more damage.
- You should never exert enough pressure to bruise or break the skin of the horse when applying acupressure.

Applying Acupressure

Applying and using acupressure on your horse is easy. You can learn to do it in a matter of minutes, but spend years learning and remembering all the pressure points! Exert pressure with one finger that you find easiest to administer constant pressure for 10-15 seconds at a time. The pressure should be firm and steady without causing pain or damage to the skin. If the horse pulls away or shows signs of pain, reduce or eliminate pressure in that area. You can practice on yourself to get an idea of the amount of pressure to apply. The response and outcome will vary from animal to animal but always start with less pressure and gauge their response as to how much additional pressure is needed.

Do not worry if you are not in the exact area as the stimulation will still help. The closer you are to the correct area the more impact there will be as long as you follow the guidelines. Introductory training sessions can take as little as 15 – 30 minutes and it's something you can do every time you see your horse by adding to your grooming routine or as needed.



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