

Veterinary Acupuncture for Horses

Acupuncture in animals is regarded as a veterinary procedure and, as such, can only be performed by qualified veterinary surgeons. Tyrrells Equine Clinic is proud to have to have Charlotte Fenn BVetMed, MRCVS as a fully qualified veterinary acupuncturist and active members of the Association of British Veterinary Acupuncturists.



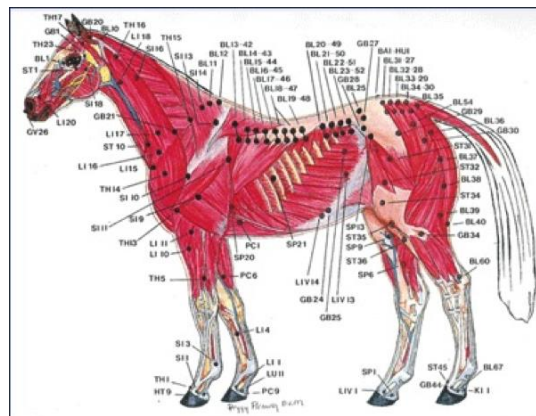
What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture has evolved from the ancient art of placing needles into special locations on the body to alleviate pain, improve recovery rates and increase resistance to disease. It has been practiced by the Chinese and other Eastern cultures for thousands of years and may be used to treat a wide variety of illnesses.

Acupuncture has gradually been receiving greater acceptance in the medical and veterinary communities. An increased awareness of acupuncture as a treatment option has resulted in an increase in scientific research over the past 40 years and therefore, improved understanding of its mechanisms of actions and its implications of use alongside conventional medicine.

Acupuncture treatment should always follow an accurate diagnosis of the problem and a full appraisal of all treatment options. In many cases acupuncture is best used in conjunction with conventional medicine however, in some situations, it can be used as a sole treatment.

Adding acupuncture to a treatment plan can help to reduce the patient's requirements for medications which may have undesirable side effects.



What conditions can be treated with acupuncture?

Pain is one of the most common indications for acupuncture. The treatment involves placing thin needles into specific points along the body. These needles cause the brain to produce a variety of naturally occurring chemicals including potent painkillers such as endorphins. As a result we are able to achieve natural pain relief as well as other positive effects such as relaxation. Acupuncture can therefore be used as part of a treatment programme for diagnosed lameness issues as well as ongoing relief for generalised arthritic discomfort/muscle stiffness.

Acupuncture can also be used for other conditions in horses such as myofascial pain, recurrent colic, chronic respiratory disorders and headshaking. It can also be used to loosen tight muscles after moderate to severe exercise.

As with any treatment there are a small percentage of animals who will not respond to acupuncture, most importantly it is extremely safe when practiced correctly and is well tolerated by the majority of horses.

What happens during a treatment?

A clean level surface for the horse to stand on will be required, either a stable or yard. Each horse will be examined at the beginning of the session and appropriate treatment points decided on depending on the response to palpation and also the specific condition being treated. The needles are very thin and most horses will tolerate them very well, in very needle shy horses a mild sedative can be administered if needed to allow application.

10-15 needles can be used in each session and the needles left in place for up to 20 minutes. Different points may be used at different sessions in the same horse. During treatment some horses will become more relaxed and sometimes sleepy; this effect may last once the needles have been removed. You do not need to change anything in your normal routine however you should avoid strenuous exercise on the day of treatment.

On average 4-6 treatments are required to start with but acupuncture can be used as part as long term management. Usually the initial treatments are given weekly until the desired effect is achieved, increasing the treatment interval depending on the animal's condition. The ongoing treatment interval will depend on the response seen and the chronicity of the issue.



What can I expect after the first treatment?

Your horse may be initially a little stiffer or uncomfortable. This may indicate that they need less stimulation at the next treatment but does suggest that they are likely to respond well in the long term. This will improve after a day or two.

There may be no response. This does not mean your animal will never respond, but it may take a little longer. Many horses will take up to the third or fourth treatment to show a significant improvement. There are a small number of horses (as with humans) that will not respond at all.

You may notice an improvement in your horse's demeanour or movement. This can occur any time within a few days of treatment. The improvement may not last until the next treatment in the early stages. As you progress in the course the effects should last longer so there can be more time between each session.



What does it cost?

The cost of each acupuncture session is £50, this includes examination, palpation of acupuncture points and needles. There will be an additional visit charge which will depend on the location of your yard and if any sedation is required this will also be extra.

The cost of acupuncture can be claimed on your insurance but please check your individual policy for further details.

For more information about veterinary acupuncture or to book an appointment please contact the clinic on 01763287744 / office@tyrrellsequine.co.uk