

# Acupuncture



Acupuncture involves the insertion of very narrow solid needles into the body with the purpose of modifying disease and providing pain relief.

Acupuncture needles stimulate nerves in skin and muscle and increase the body's release of natural painkillers - endorphins and serotonin. These chemicals act in the pain pathways of both the brain and spinal cord which can result in exceptional pain relief.

## What can acupuncture be used for?

Conditions in horses that appear to respond well to acupuncture include:

- muscle pain
- back pain
- arthritis
- laminitis
- post viral fatigue
- allergic respiratory conditions
- chronic diarrhoea
- non healing wounds.

Acupuncture may also be a valuable addition to the management of the performance horse, as it can help muscle pain and therefore maximises performance, keeping your athlete at the top of their game.

In the more senior patient, acupuncture may be used to alleviate pain from arthritis, which can improve their sense of well being and quality of life.

## KEY POINTS

- Acupuncture is an act of veterinary surgery and can only legally be performed by a veterinary surgeon.
- It used as an adjunct to conventional treatment.
- Acupuncture is a safe procedure.
- There is increasing evidence for efficacy.
- Acupuncture is covered by many insurance policies when recommended by a vet – but check your policy.
- Individual responses do vary.
- Treatments should be performed in a bare stable as needles are easily lost in straw and shavings.
- Do not travel your horse immediately after a treatment because they can be drowsy for up to 24 hours.

## History of Acupuncture

The insertion of sharp implements or needles into the body has been used as a therapeutic technique for thousands of years.

There are two approaches to acupuncture therapy – Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and the Western Scientific Approach.

Western veterinary acupuncture involves the use of the therapy following orthodox clinical diagnosis, with points selected on neurophysiological principles.

## How will my horse react to Acupuncture?

Most horses react well to needling, feeling nothing or only a slight sensation on insertion of the needles. Individual responses do vary - some horses appear to become slightly sedated during a treatment while others need to be chemically sedated.

To find out more information and find a veterinary surgeon that carries out acupuncture near you visit [www.abva.co.uk](http://www.abva.co.uk)



ACUPUNCTURE NEEDLES  
INSERTED ALONG A  
PATIENT'S BACK



Improvement in the condition may be noticed after the first session, but the effects of needling are cumulative and lasting, so normally three to four sessions a week apart are needed to modulate pain and restore normal function.

Some patients along with some diseases are refractory to acupuncture and will not respond to treatment



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