Equine Acupuncture and nerve damage

by Sue Wild, Wild Horses Naturally

Acupressure is based on traditional Chinese medicine, just like acupuncture. Reiki and other forms of energetic medicine. A simple explanation of how acupressure works is this:

In traditional Chinese medicine, there are a total of 361 acupoints, and they all have specific energetics and functional benefits. These points have been identified and categorised over hundreds of years, so practitioners have a resourceful tool to use in the non-invasive treatment of Equine Acupuncture.

Acupoints are specific points located on a meridian where chi energy flows close to the surface of the body. Meridians are a network of channels, much like nerves, which connect and influence each other. Think of the meridian system in your horse’s body as a highway with exits to towns along it. Imagine one of these exits is blocked due to an accident and so on. As equine practitioners, we are taught to recognise where this blockage is, by the signs and symptoms exhibited by the horse, and use a gentle massage technique (acupressure) to unblock them. The points that we use in the horse are called acupoints.

Yin and yang energy

I am sure everyone is aware of the Yin Yang symbol. They are perfectly opposite each other and solely dependant on each other. Neither can exist without each other. When Yin and Yang do, however, become uneven, illness will arise. An infection, the yang (heat part), takes over some of the yin (cold part) forcing the imbalance. Either injury can prevent muscles from working and result in loss of feeling from the area of the body served by that nerve, often for years.

Nerve damage to either the brain or spinal cord can cause delayed tissue damage, so the horse owners may not recognise that the horse has, in fact, got a damaged nerve for a week or so.

Basic functions of the nerves are:

- Sensory Nerve - To change or stimulate,
- Integrative Nerve - To process the information,
- Motor Nerve - To put into action.

Some signs and symptoms include:

- Lameness: radial nerve damage
- Muscular atrophy: This will take a longer time to recover as it took a long time to degenerate to this state. It’s basically a wasting away of the muscle. Acupressure along the bladder meridian (spine) and along the gall bladder (21) near the top of the shoulder blade are just two of the acupoints for treatment.

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Acupressure works by clearing the pathways along the meridian lines to enable the chi energy to flow along the meridians to reach the nerve ending, muscles and ligaments providing them with nutrients, vitamins and minerals in order to regenerate and stimulate growth.

The owner is asked to check the horse every 3-4 hours for any changes. As the chi cycle takes 24 hours to work through the horse’s body, you may not see an immediate sign of wellbeing or improvement, so be patient.

Conclusion

Single nerve damage can take a while to heal, but please remember to have your veterinarian take a look at your horse. My clients have found equine acupressure very rewarding and effective in regeneration and healing.

Acupressure is very non-invasive and is performed using your thumb, fingers and the palm of your hand, which can be taught to the owners so they can treat their own animals; making it a daily ritual and effectively bonding the two of you even more. All of the procedures and treatments are in conjunction with your veterinarian’s knowledge and NOT instead of.

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Preparation and treatments

On the commencement of an acupressure treatment, make sure that you are connected with your own inner chi and your horse is comfortable. It’s also just as important that you’ve asked permission from your horse to begin treatment.

Place the ball of your thumb on the acupressure point perpendicular to the meridian you are working on. Gently apply direct pressure whilst breathing out and then slowly release the point, moving onto the next point. Keeping both hands on your horse while giving a treatment enables you to feel their responses, which is usually a release of skin pressure and a softening of the muscle.

Yawning, farting, peeing and sighing are really good reactions, and they are signs that the treatment has been both rewarding and beneficial to the horse.

Oedema: Fluid in the joints, cavities and intercellular spaces. Again, the bladder meridian and also the large intestine meridians around the top of the lateral near side hoof would be good places to start treatment.

How does equine acupressure help?

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
Sue Wild is a certified Equine Practitioner who studied under the professional guidance of Tallgrass Animal Acupressure Institute in America. Additionally, she is a Reiki Master, trained with the Australian School of Reiki and specialised in horses. This included their behavioural traits, both physically and psychologically. Sue has a 25-year background in nursing, as well as 10 years of working in social work, specialising in drug and alcohol, as well as working with teenagers on the street. Sue competes in Western Pleasure, practices and trains her own horses the ‘Natural Horsemanship’ way and has had an interest in natural healing for animals all her life.