



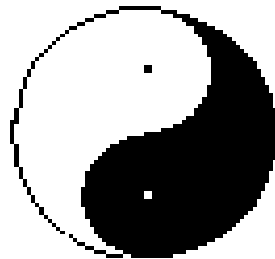
Veterinary Acupuncture

*"It does not matter whether medicine is old or new,
So long as it brings about a cure.
It matters not whether theories be eastern or western,
So long as they prove to be true."*

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The *Monad*, an ancient Yin-Yang symbol, illustrates the Yin-Yang relationship especially well.



The dark segment represents Yin, whereas the light represents Yang. The two dynamically oscillate around each other; each needs the other and continuously transforms into the other; they are opposite, mutually complementary and ever-changing. Together, they form unity. Everything is relative to something else. Within each main polarity, the small dot of opposite colour symbolises that *there are no absolutes; there is always some Yin in Yang and vice-versa*.

The only absolute is the Law of Change; everything must change in time.

Holistic medicine as defined her by Are Thoresen, is especially occupied by four main factors in development of disease; (a) *the predisposing factor*, (b) *the initiating factor*, (c) *the weak anatomical structure* and (d) *the syndrome*.

- The **predisposing factor (a)** is an inner unbalance, usually a **deficiency**, in one or more of the 12 main processes (meridians, organs).
- The **stressor** or **initiating factor (b)** is the external or internal *stress* which trigger the already deficient internal process to collapse.

In addition to these two main factors responsible for the development of disease, it will be important also to be able to consider

- The **weak spot (c)**. This is the "Achilles-heel" of the organism, the *weak anatomical structure* or stressed part where any deficiency most probably will manifest itself.
- In this weak anatomical area the **syndrome (d)** will manifest. The syndrome is the material *manifestation of the disease*. The syndrome is not the disease itself, only the bodys own manifestation of the inner deficiency. This manifestation is also very often the bodys attempt to help the deficient inner process.

Here are some answers that will help you to understand:

- *What is acupuncture?*
- *For which conditions is acupuncture indicated?*
- *How does acupuncture work?*
- *Is acupuncture painful?*
- *Is acupuncture safe for animals?*
- *How long do acupuncture treatments last and how often are they given?*
- *How should I choose an acupuncturist for my animals?*

Q: What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture may be defined as the **insertion of needles into specific points** on the body **to cause a desired healing effect**. This technique has been used in veterinary practice in China **for at least 3000 years** to treat many ailments. The Chinese also use acupuncture against such problems as founder and colic in horses. **Acupuncture is used all over the world, either by itself or in conjunction with Western medicine**, to treat a wide variety of maladies in every species of domestic animal and in exotic animals. Modern veterinary acupuncturists use solid needles, hypodermic needles, bleeding needles, electricity, heat, massage, and low power lasers to stimulate acupuncture points. **Acupuncture is not a cure-all**, but can work very well when it is indicated.

Q: For which conditions is acupuncture indicated?

Acupuncture is indicated **mainly for functional problems** such as those that involve **paralysis, noninfectious inflammation (such as allergies), and pain**.

For small animals, the following are some of the general conditions which may be treated with acupuncture:

- **Musculoskeletal problems**, such as **arthritis or spinal disc pathology**.
- **Skin problems**, such as lick granuloma.
- **Respiratory problems**, such as feline asthma.
- Gastrointestinal problems.
- Selected **reproductive problems**.
- **Nervous system problems**, such as nerve paralysis / traumata.

For large animals, acupuncture is again commonly **used for functional problems**. Some of the general conditions where it might be applied are the following:

- **Musculoskeletal problems**, such as **sore backs** or downer cow syndrome.
- **Nervous system problems**, such as facial nerve paralysis.
- Skin problems, such as **allergic dermatitis**.
- **Respiratory problems**, such as heaves and "Bleeders".
- Selected **reproductive disorders**.
- Gastrointestinal problems, such as **non-surgical colic**.

In addition, regular acupuncture treatments can treat **minor sports injuries** as they occur and **help to keep muscles and tendons resistant to injury**. World class professional and amateur **athletes often use acupuncture as a routine part of their training**. If your animals are involved in any athletic endeavor, such as racing, jumping, or showing, acupuncture can help keep them in top physical condition.

Q: How does acupuncture work?

According to ancient **Chinese medical philosophy**, **disease is the result of an imbalance of energy in the body**. **Acupuncture is believed to balance this energy and, thereby, assist the body to heal disease**.

In Western terms, acupuncture can assist the body to heal itself by affecting certain physiological changes.

For example,

acupuncture can stimulate nerves,

increase blood circulation,

relieve muscle spasm,

and cause the release of hormones, such as endorphins (one of the body's pain control chemicals) and cortisol (a natural steroid).

Q: Is acupuncture painful?

For small animals, the **insertion of acupuncture needles is virtually painless**. The larger **needles** necessary for large animals **may cause some pain as the needle passes through the skin**.

In all animals, once the needles are in place, there should be no pain.

Most animals become very relaxed and may even become sleepy. Nevertheless, acupuncture treatment may cause some sensation, presumed to be those such as tingles, cramps, or numbness which can occur in humans and which may be uncomfortable to some animals.

Q: Is acupuncture safe for animals?

Acupuncture is **one of the safest forms of medical treatment for animals** when it is **administered by a properly trained veterinarian**.

Side effects of acupuncture are rare, but they do exist.

An animal's **condition may seem worse for up to 48 hours after a treatment**.

Other animals **may become sleepy or lethargic for 24 hours after acupuncture**.

These **effects are an indication that some physiological changes are**

developing, and they are most often followed by an improvement in the animal's condition.

Q: How long do acupuncture treatments last and how often are they given?

The length and frequency of acupuncture treatments depends on the condition of the patient and the method of stimulation that is used by the veterinarian.

Stimulation of an individual acupuncture point may take as little as **10 seconds** or as much as **30 minutes**. A simple acute problem, such as sprain, may require only one treatment, whereas more severe or chronic ailments may need a dozen treatments. When multiple treatments are necessary, they usually begin intensively and are tapered to maximum efficiency. **A positive response is usually seen after the first to third treatment.** Once a maximum positive response is achieved treatments are usually tapered off. **Many animals with chronic conditions can be maintained with 2-4 treatments per year.**

Animals undergoing athletic training can benefit from acupuncture. The frequency depends on the intensity of the training and the condition of the athlete.

Q: How should I choose an acupuncturist for my animals?

There are two important criteria you should look for in a veterinary acupuncturist:

1. Your veterinary acupuncturist must be a **licensed veterinarian** or **physiotherapist**.
2. Your **veterinary acupuncturist should have formal training in practice of acupuncture for animals.**

In most countries, states and provinces, veterinary acupuncture is considered a surgical procedure that only licensed veterinarians may legally administer to animals. **A veterinarian is in the best position to diagnose an animal's health problem and then to determine whether an animal is likely to benefit from an acupuncture treatment, or whether its problem requires chemical, surgical, or no intervention.**