

Acupuncture in Companion Animal

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Acupuncture

- Definition: - Acupuncture involves the insertion of very thin needles through skin at strategic points on your body.
- Traditional Chinese medicine explains acupuncture as a technique for balancing the flow of energy or life force known as chi or qi (Chee) believed to flow through pathways (meridians) in body.



Mechanisms of Action

Several processes have been proposed to explain acupuncture's effects, primarily those on pain. Acupuncture points are believed to stimulate the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord) to release chemicals into the muscles, spinal cord and brain. These chemicals either change the experience of pain or release other chemicals, such as hormones, that influence the body's self-regulating systems. The biochemical changes may stimulate the body's natural healing abilities and promote physical and emotional well- being.

Mechanisms of Action- There are three main mechanisms of action:

- I. Conduction of electromagnetic signals
- II. Activation of opioid systems
- III. Changes in brain chemistry sensation, and Involuntary body functions

1. Conduction of electromagnetic signals

- Western scientists have found evidence that acupuncture points and strategic conductors of electromagnetic signals. Stimulating points along these pathways through acupuncture enables electromagnetic signals to be relayed at a greater rate than under normal conditions. These signals may start the flow of pain-killing biochemicals such as endorphins and of immune system cells to specific sites that are injured or vulnerable to disease.

2. Activation of opioid systems

- Researchers have found that several types of opioids may be released into the central nervous system during acupuncture treatment, thereby reducing pain.

3. Changes in brain chemistry sensation, and Involuntary body functions

- Studies have shown that acupuncture may alter brain chemistry by changing the release of neurotransmitters and neuro-hormones in a good way. Acupuncture also has been documented to affect the parts of the central nervous system related to sensation and involuntary body functions, such as immune reactions and processes whereby a person's blood pressure, blood flow and body temperature are regulated.

Clinical Practice

- Acupuncture is a form of alternative medicine. It is used most commonly for pain relief, though it is also used to treat a wide range of conditions. Acupuncture is generally only used in combination with other forms of treatment.
- It may be considered in the treatment for nonspecific, non-inflammatory low back pain only in conjunction with conventional therapy.
- Acupuncture is the insertion of thin needles into the skin.
- A typical session entails lying still while approximately five to twenty needles are inserted; for the majority of cases, the needles will be left in place for ten to twenty minutes.
- It can be associated with the application of heat, pressure, or laser light.

Types And Styles of Acupuncture

1. Traditional Chinese Acupuncture

- The acupuncture practiced as a healing modality of traditional Chinese medicine is the most common form used in the United States. It focuses on bringing balance to the body, regardless of the condition being treated, by restoring the proper flow of Qi (life energy) along the body's meridians (energy pathways). Practitioners insert fine, thin needles approximately 1.5 inches long



to stimulate flow in specific areas called acupoints. They may also incorporate moxibustion or cupping into an acupuncture session.

2. Japanese Style Acupuncture

- This style is based on the Chinese concept of meridian therapy, but uses a more subtle approach. Practitioners use fewer needles, and they insert them to a shallower depth. Japanese acupuncturists often incorporate touch into their diagnostic process. They will also sometimes use acupressure or moxibustion as well.

3. Korean Acupuncture

- Combining aspects drawn from both Chinese and Japanese acupuncture, Korean acupuncture has its own distinct style. Differences include the use of many more needles, and also the use of copper needles instead of the standard stainless-steel type that are widely used elsewhere. Korean Hand Acupuncture is a variation that uses only the hand to treat specific corresponding areas of the body and their disharmonies.

4. Auricular Acupuncture

- Like Korean Hand Acupuncture, auricular acupuncture uses one area of the body—the ear—to treat areas of the rest of the body and to overcome certain disharmonies. The practitioner uses either needles or minute electrical currents to stimulate points on the ear. This microsystem-type of acupuncture is commonly used for the treatment of pain, and for alcohol and drug addiction.

5. Laser Acupuncture

- This newer method of stimulation uses low-energy laser beams in place of acupuncture needles to influence the acupuncture points. Qualified practitioners may use laser acupuncture selectively along with more traditional methods of acupuncture as an alternative for patients adverse to the use of needles.

6. Teishein

- Another form of needle-free acupuncture, teishein uses “pressure needles” as a form of non-invasive stimulation of acupoints. These instruments are a type of telescopic, blunt placebo needle that touches the skin without penetrating it. The practitioner touches or taps the skin with light strokes. It is currently used in hospitals, clinics, and institutes around the world, especially for the management of pain.

7. Acupressure

- A combination of the word’s “acupuncture” and “pressure,” this form of therapy also stimulates acupoints without using needles. The practitioner uses precise finger placement to apply pressure over specific points along the body’s meridians to enhance the flow of qi. A related Japanese technique, shiatsu, is also available to provide relief and relaxation.



Other Types of Acupuncture: -

Classical Acupuncture



Electroacupuncture



Laser Acupuncture



Cupping



Acupoint Injection

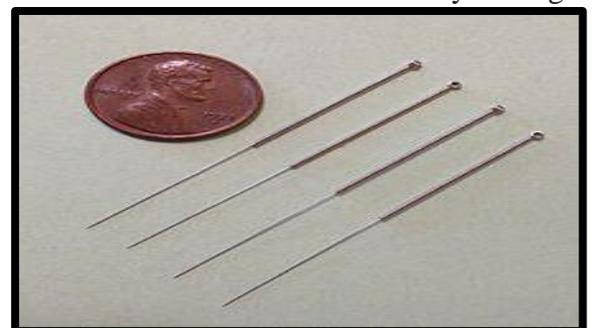


Moxibustion



Needles

- The most common mechanism of stimulation of acupuncture points employs penetration of the skin by thin metal needles, which are manipulated manually or the needle may be further stimulated by electrical stimulation (electro acupuncture).
- Acupuncture needles are typically made of stainless steel, making them flexible and preventing them from rusting or breaking.
- Needles are usually disposed of after each use to prevent contamination. Reusable needles when used should be sterilized between applications.
- In many areas, only sterile, single-use acupuncture needles are allowed and needles vary in length between 13 to 130 millimeters (0.51 to 5.12 in), with shorter needles used near the face and eyes, and longer needles in areas with thicker tissues; needle diameters vary from 0.16 mm (0.006 in) to 0.46 mm (0.018 in), with thicker needles used on more robust patients. Thinner needles may be



flexible and require tubes for insertion. The tip of the needle should not be made too sharp to prevent breakage, although blunt needles cause more pain.

Needling Technique

Insertion

- The skin is sterilized and needles are inserted, frequently with a plastic guide tube. Needles may be manipulated in various ways, including spinning, flicking or moving up and down relative to the skin. Since most pain is felt in the superficial layers of the skin, a quick insertion of the needle is recommended. Often the needles are stimulated by hand in order to cause a dull, localized, aching sensation that is called *de qi*, as well as "needle grasp," a tugging feeling felt by the acupuncturist and generated by a mechanical interaction between the needle and skin. Acupuncture can be painful. The skill level of the acupuncturist may influence how painful the needle insertion is, and a sufficiently skilled practitioner may be able to insert the needles without causing any pain.

De-qi sensation

- *De-qi* (Chinese: pinyin: "arrival of qi") refers to a claimed sensation of numbness, distension, or electrical tingling at the needling site. If these sensations are not observed then inaccurate location of the acupoint, improper depth of needle insertion, inadequate manual manipulation, are blamed. If *de-qi* is not immediately observed upon needle insertion, various manual manipulation techniques are often applied to promote it (such as "plucking", "shaking" or "trembling").
- Once *de-qi* is observed, techniques might be used which attempt to "influence" the *de-qi*; for example, by certain manipulation the *de-qi* can allegedly be conducted from the needling site towards more distant sites of the body. Other techniques aim at "tonifying" The former techniques are used in deficiency patterns, the latter in excess patterns. *De qi* is more important in Chinese acupuncture, while Western and Japanese patients may not consider it a necessary part of the treatment.

Benefits Of Acupuncture

- The fundamental belief of acupuncture is that illness is the result of blocked or interrupted chi. Chi provides your body with healing energy. Acupuncture seeks to remove these blockages and return your energy flow to a state of balance.
- Acupuncture is used to treats hundreds of conditions and symptoms, including: pain, nausea, vomiting, headache, menstrual cramps, allergies.



Other conditions acupuncture may help include:

- Allergies
- Digestive disorders
- Anxiety
- Pain
- Arthritis
- Chronic illnesses like liver, kidney, or heart disease
- Cancer
- Old age
- End of life

How does acupuncture work?

- Chinese medicine calls the energy that flows through the body qi. Chinese medicine practitioners believe qi disruptions create imbalances in the body's energy that lead to illness.
- Some forms of acupuncture aim to rebalance qi with needles that touch acupuncture points (acupoints) throughout the body. There are hundreds of acupoints in the body along 14 major meridians, also called energy-carrying channels.

The needles stimulate the body's existing systems to:

- React to an illness or symptom.
- Rebalance the body.
- Release natural chemicals, such as endorphins, the body's natural painkillers, and neurotransmitters, chemicals that control nerve impulses.

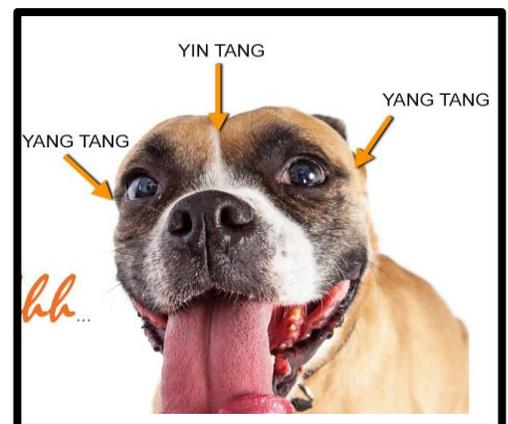
Different point of acupuncture in Dogs: -

1) Yin Tang Point

The 'third eye' spot on your pet is Yin Tang Point. It is a single point in the center of your pet's forehead located directly between and slightly above the eyes. Massage this area using one or two fingers and watch your pet melt into relaxation. This point is especially important for the flow of calming energy through your pet's body.

2) Yang Tang Points

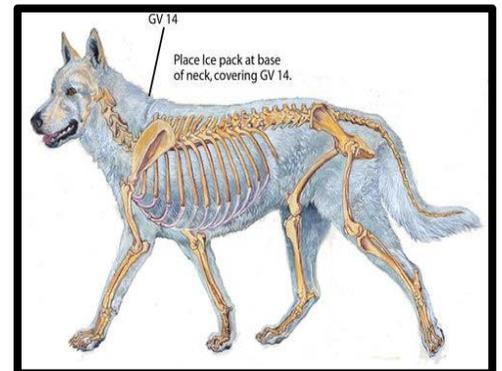
The points are located on either side of the eyes where the skull indents a bit. Apply pressure to this area by stretching your hand over your pet's forehead and massaging one side of his face with your thumb and the other side with one of your other fingers. Animals typically close their eyes and fall into a



half sleep when this part of their body is massaged. The points are associated with overall wellbeing, calm, focus and pain reduction.

3) The GV-14 point

This point is located just below the point where the skull attaches to the spine. The point is considered to be a large nexus for many lives energy channels in the body.

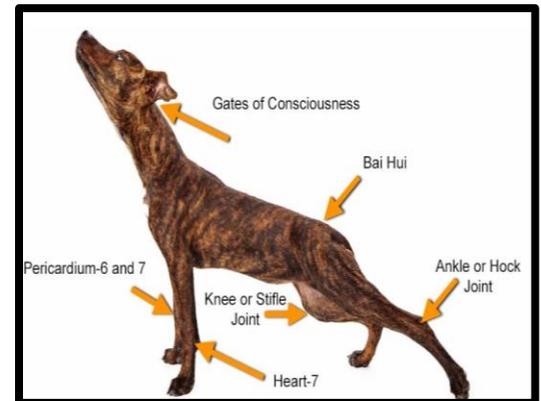


4) The Heart-1 Point or the Armpit

The point is located in the armpit of pet, just where the front leg meets the inside of your pet's body. Massage this area using a back and forth or circular motion. Most pets fall into a half sleep when you massage Heart-1. Massaging this area will be deeply soothing to both of you.

5) The Heart-7 and Pericardium-6 and 7

There are three important pressure points. The Heart-7 is located on the outside, and the Pericardium-6 and 7 are located on the inside. Animals that are experiencing arthritic pain, suffering from nausea or stomach issues, or who are anxious benefit from overall massage and pressure to this area. Grasp pet's entire wrist area with your fingers and thumb and massage. Focus on the inside and outside of the carpus. Some pets do not like their legs and feet touched, so work slowly and do not force the issue.



6) Stomach 36 (St 36), Leg Three-Mile

In Chinese medicine, Stomach 36 is considered the powerful grounding acupoint. High-spirited, high-energy need to be more securely earth-bound and stimulating this can help the dog feel as if he belongs on this earth. Stomach 36 is known to bring the flow of energy down. point is located on the outside of both the hind legs, just below the dog's stifle (knee) toward the front of the leg.



most dogs point

This

Stomach 36 (St 36)

7) Bai Hui, Heaven's Gate or Point of 100 Meetings

The Bai Hui Point is a classic animal acupoint that has many benefits. It can be used to help clear the animal's mind and provide an overall feeling of well-being. It is often used to enhance the dog's ability



to “tune in” to himself. Many dogs with excessive energy issues do not know where their body ends and the rest of the world begins; the Bai Hui point can draw the dog’s awareness back to his own body. This point is located on the sacrum right on his midline.

Side Effects of Acupuncture

- Patients may occasionally experience slight bruising at the point of needle insertion.
- Needle Shock": a feeling of faintness, chilliness and perhaps slight nausea. Needle shock happens rarely, but when it does, it is most likely to happen in situations in which the patient is very nervous about the needles, is extremely exhausted or fatigued, or is experiencing low blood sugar from not having eaten for a long period of time before the acupuncture treatment.
- Needle shock can be disquieting to the patient but is not considered harmful. Most states that regulate acupuncture require practitioners to provide informed consent forms outlining these possible side-effects.

Acupuncture Shouldn't Be Used In

- Drug or alcohol intoxication
- Use of a pacemaker
- A seizure disorders
- Bleeding disorder such as hemophilia or use of blood thinners
- Infections skin disorder or disease
- If pregnant, needling in the abdominal area or lumbosacral region should be avoided.

Indications	Examples	
Musculoskeletal	Osteoarthritis (knee) Fibromyalgia Back pain Neck pain Postoperative pain	Evidence suggests acupuncture can be helpful for management of osteoarthritis of the knee, fibromyalgia, and back, neck, and postoperative pain
Gastrointestinal	Nausea and vomiting Constipation Postoperative ileus IBS	Evidence suggests acupuncture can be helpful for management of chemotherapy induced nausea and postoperative nausea and vomiting. Inconsistent evidence suggests efficacy of acupuncture for management of constipation, postoperative ileus, and IBS



Gynaecologic/reproductive	Hot flashes Infertility PMS	Inconsistent evidence suggests efficacy of acupuncture for management of hot flashes, infertility, and PMS
Psychiatric/mood	Stress Anxiety Depression	Inconsistent evidence suggests efficacy of acupuncture for management of stress, anxiety, and depression
Endocrine	Obesity	Inconsistent evidence to make recommendations about the value of acupuncture in treatment of obesity

