

# Acupuncture

*Dr Posey is a certified acupuncturist with the International Acupuncture Society.*

## *Our Philosophy*

At Pacific Crest Sporthorse we know what it takes to keep your horse performing at his best. When conventional therapies just aren't enough, we are willing to look outside the box for alternative options that may help. Our veterinarians routinely use acupuncture to help maintain soundness in our performance horse patients, or as an adjunctive therapy to help manage injuries or other soundness problems when they do arise.

## *Benefits*

Acupuncture is a very effective treatment option to help minimize performance-related muscular soreness, to manage compensatory soreness secondary to other injuries, or in an effort to maintain a hard working horse at his peak. Many people fail to recognize that acupuncture can also be a useful therapeutic option for medical problems beyond the musculoskeletal system. For example, a mare with decreased fertility may be having difficulty clearing fluid from her uterus. Acupuncture can help lead to smooth muscle contractions of the uterus, thereby helping the mare clean herself out. Or, if your horse has allergy problems (hives, skin rashes or a chronic cough), acupuncture, in combination with medical therapy, can help control symptoms and improve his response to other medications. Our veterinarians even use the occasional acupuncture technique to relieve jaw pain that can occur following a dental procedure or to help quiet intestinal spasms that occur during an acute colic.

The best news is that acupuncture has very little risk and a simple non-invasive examination and initial treatment can tell you whether it's likely to help—giving you another tool to help keep your horse performing at his best.

## *Basic Acupuncture Services*

Acupuncture is a procedure where tiny needles are inserted at specific bodily locations for therapeutic purposes. This procedure was originally developed by the ancient Chinese, who believed that these anatomic locations were portals in

the skin. Through these portals, the ancient acupuncturist could access meridians, or energy channels, that communicated with internal organs. Experiment-based research has since shown us that these “acupoints” are actually anatomic locations particularly rich in nerve endings and/or blood vessels. When needles are placed in these locations, neurotransmitters and other local factors are released, starting cascades that ultimately lead to body-wide therapeutic effects.

When you schedule an initial acupuncture appointment for your horse, our veterinarians will perform a basic musculoskeletal evaluation as well as a DAPE (Diagnostic Acupuncture Exam) exam to detect reactivity over critical acupuncture points. Further diagnostics may be recommended as a result of this exam in order to pinpoint sources of lameness or discomfort as accurately as possible.

An acupuncture treatment involves placement of needles into the points appropriate for your horse’s specific problems. Most horses tolerate the needles well, although some will require light sedation for the procedure. We utilize electrostimulation of critical points for maximal benefit. Exam and treatment typically takes approximately an hour and if your horse responds well, follow up treatments may be recommended. For a performance horse in hard work, regular treatments may be suggested as a part of his basic management routine.