



Claws & Paws

VETERINARY HOSPITAL®

ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture is the stimulation of specific points on the body that have the ability to alter various biochemical and physiologic conditions to achieve the desired effect. In Traditional Chinese Medicine theory, disease is an imbalance of energy in the body. Acupuncture therapy is based on balancing this energy (Qi), correcting the imbalance, thereby healing the pet. In other words, acupuncture is a means of helping the body heal itself.

Acupuncture has been used successfully for nearly 4000 years on animals, as well as human beings. As a matter of fact, it is still the treatment of choice for one quarter of the world's population for many problems. It is now being utilized by an increasing number of veterinarians, alongside Western medicine, for various disease conditions. Although it is not a panacea, or cure-all, it works very well to alleviate many ailments that impair your pet.



What conditions respond to acupuncture? Acupuncture bridges a gap between medicine and surgery. In the Western world, acupuncture is used primarily when medications are not working, are contraindicated because of possible side effects, or when surgery is not feasible. In China, it is often used as the primary treatment before conventional medicines and surgery.

In small animals including exotics, and large animals such as equines, acupuncture is most commonly used for: musculoskeletal problems (e.g. arthritis), skin problems, nervous disorders, reproductive disorders, respiratory problems, poor immunity and other internal medicine issues such as diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease, heart (cardiac), liver, and kidney (renal) disease, etc.

How does it work? Acupuncture is now known to affect all major physiologic systems. It works primarily via the central nervous system, affecting the musculoskeletal, hormonal, and cardiovascular systems.

Pain, while a good thing, is not so great when the body hyper-reacts to chronic pain. This means smaller degrees of stimulus will result in stronger degrees of pain. Acupuncture will stop this pain cycle from occurring, indicative of why it works best in arthritic cases. With hip disease for example, the animal will stop using his leg because it hurts. This causes the joint to weaken due to loss of muscle mass, and the leg will become increasingly weaker, causing a never-ending cycle. Acupuncture stops the pain so that the animal will use the leg more, resulting in stronger, healthier legs.

Acupuncture does more than just relieve pain, it also increases circulation, causes a release of many neurotransmitters and neurohormones (some of which are endorphins, the "natural pain-killing" hormones), relieves muscle spasms, stimulates nerves and the body's defense system, among many other beneficial effects. The acupuncture needles cause little areas of microtrauma, causing an influx of fresh oxygen, blood, and nutrients to the treated area, therapeutically flushing away harmful toxins.

Is it painful? How will the pet react? Occasionally pets will experience a brief moment of sensitivity as the needles penetrate the skin in more delicate areas. Once the needles are in place, most pets relax and often fall asleep during treatment. For some nervous pets, it may take several treatments before they feel comfortable enough to fully relax for the procedure.

Is it safe? Acupuncture is one of the safest therapies available if practiced by a competent acupuncturist, and side effects are rare.

What are the disadvantages of acupuncture? The main disadvantage of acupuncture is the owner's misunderstanding of what to expect from its use: the belief that the pet will miraculously improve, that all conditions can be treated with acupuncture, and that the animal will only need one treatment when several treatments are usually necessary to achieve (and sometimes maintain) the desired result. Other potential disadvantages include the chance that the pet will overuse an injured limb (because of decreased pain as a result of the acupuncture), resulting in a more serious injury.

A Full Service Veterinary Hospital for Small Animals & Some Exotics
281.997.1426 - mail@cpvh.com - www.CPVH.com

MON
7:30AM – 6:00PM
TUE
7:30AM – 7:00PM

WED
7:30AM – 6:00PM
THU
7:30AM – 6:00PM

FRI
7:30AM – 6:00PM
SAT
8:00AM – 1:00PM

How often and for how long will the pet need treatment? Treatments may last from 10 seconds to 30 minutes depending on the condition treated and the method used. There are many ways of stimulating acupuncture points, including needles, electroacupuncture, aquapuncture (injecting a solution into the point), moxibustion (heating the point), and laser acupuncture. Pets may be treated as frequently as one to three times a week (depending again upon the condition treated), but typically are treated once weekly for four to six weeks. After the initial treatment period, the intervals between acupuncture treatments are then extended based upon the pet's response to treatment and what is needed to maintain improvement. Most pets are seen once every two to six months for continued maintenance therapy, although there are some pets who no longer need acupuncture therapy once their condition has resolved.

Examples of Pets Helped with Acupuncture

“Buster” was one of Dr. Wickel's very first patients. He had heart disease with a chronic, severe cough. With acupuncture and chinese herbal medications, Buster became cough free and lived to be 16 years of age.

“Ruby” is an English Bulldog who came to Claws & Paws at the age of 1 ½ years screaming in pain. She had a congenital deformity of her vertebrae (a bone in her back) which was pinching her spinal cord and nerve. Her owners had taken her to a specialist who said that surgery probably wouldn't help. It was either get her out of pain or they would have to make a heart-wrenching decision. When Ruby walked into the clinic she was screaming in pain even though she was on two very strong pain medications. Dr. Wickel treated her with electro-acupuncture for an hour and she screamed the entire time. Three days later Ruby was treated again and she only screamed once. The next week Ruby was pain free and completely off of pain medications. She was treated twice more and has not needed treatment since. That was 8 years ago.

“Classic” is one of our current patients who is 17 years of age. Dr. Wickel has been treating her for the past few years for recurrent pancreatitis, heart disease, and severe arthritis. We are happy to say that her pancreatic episodes are few in number and quickly corrected, her heart problem is under control, and her arthritis pain is none to minimal. To say the least, she is one happy girl!

Over the years Dr. Wickel has treated multiple Dachshunds with IV disk disease with great results. Some have never needed additional treatment again after the initial episode, while others are seen on an “as needed” basis.

“Shortcake” was an early patient who seized and had difficulty walking. She had been taken to Texas A&M where the owner was told to put her to sleep. She was treated by Dr. Wickel for only three months when she completely recovered.

While we would like to tell you that every single case has the desired results, we cannot. However, the many successes and lives saved make up for the few who do not respond.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have an interest in acupuncture for your pet or if you have any questions. You can also find us on the web at www.CPVH.com or on our free mobile app.



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