



Waterlane  
EQUINE VETS

# FACTSHEETS

## Acupuncture

Did you know that one of our vets, Hetty, is qualified in acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a safe procedure which involves inserting fine sterile needles at specific points in the body to relieve pain and stimulate healing. It has been practiced on humans in China for over 3000 years and is now being applied in veterinary medicine. Traditional Chinese Medicine is a holistic approach based on moving energy along channels throughout the body, but the Western approach to acupuncture is more scientific, with needles placed at specifically chosen points.

These points are chosen because they have been found to have a high density of nerve endings, arterioles and lymphatics, as well as high cellular conductivity which produce the desired responses in the nervous, endocrine and immune systems. It is also shown that when inserted, the needle causes a release of opioids, beta endorphins and other pain relieving modulators into the system making acupuncture a useful complementary treatment to be carried out alongside conventional medicine. We most often use it as an adjunctive therapy in our lameness and poor performance cases, for example:



- In horses with back or sacroiliac pain
- In horses with arthritis
- As part of a rehabilitation programme following surgery
- Maintenance treatment for competition horses



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Acupuncture has also been shown to be beneficial for a range of gastrointestinal, reproductive and respiratory issues.

Most horses are very tolerant to acupuncture, with very few requiring sedation to assist in placement of needles and prevent resistance to its positive effects.

The number of sessions required is determined by the findings of the clinical examination and your horse's response to treatment. We recommend that cases with chronic problems be seen every 7 - 10 days initially for 4 sessions, and then to slowly increase the interval between subsequent sessions. Each treatment lasts around 45 mins - 1 hour and we advise that horses should have a couple of quiet days post treatment and then resume normal exercise.

By law, acupuncture can only be carried out by a Veterinary Surgeon. If you would like to discuss acupuncture with one of our vets, and whether it may be helpful for your horse or pony, then please don't hesitate to contact us.

