



Acu-Deworming: Acupressure to Support Parasite Management in Horses

by Susan Tenney



Large Intestine 4 (LI 4) lies on the inside surface of the front leg, immediately below the carpal joint (the “knee”), directly on the cannon bone. It sits in front of the small bump at the top of the splint bone called the “head” of the splint.

Holistic practitioners often compare the body to a garden. With this in mind, consider your horse’s current parasite program. Are you doing the equine equivalent of constantly spraying your plants with toxic pesticides to temporarily rid them of an infestation? Or are you strengthening your plants by nourishing the soil so that the plants in your garden develop their own natural resistance to pests? Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) takes the “garden” approach, encouraging us to cultivate deeper health for our horses so that they are less vulnerable to parasites.

If you are like many natural-minded caretakers, you already manage your horse’s parasite levels with a holistic deworming program. You monitor egg counts regularly, use natural worm control products like diatomaceous earth and keep your pastures relatively free of manure piles. Maybe you also supplement these practices with products like probiotics, homeopathic remedies or

minerals to keep your horse’s digestive system healthy. Adding TCM techniques to your current program helps you nourish your horse’s vitality and keep them naturally parasite-free.

Nourishing Nature

TCM practitioners view worm infestation as a sign of weakness in the immune system and digestion. They use acupuncture, acupressure, and medicinal herbs to address these weaknesses by following a two-step program.

The first step is to get the parasite count down and relieve other symptoms like bloating and poor coat quality. From there the focus shifts from symptom relief to building energy and strengthening the health of the intestines and immune system. The first step works to alleviate the symptoms; the second step addresses the root *causes* of your horse’s vulnerability. Together these steps

ACUPRESSURE POWER POINTS AND INTESTINAL SUPPORT POINTS

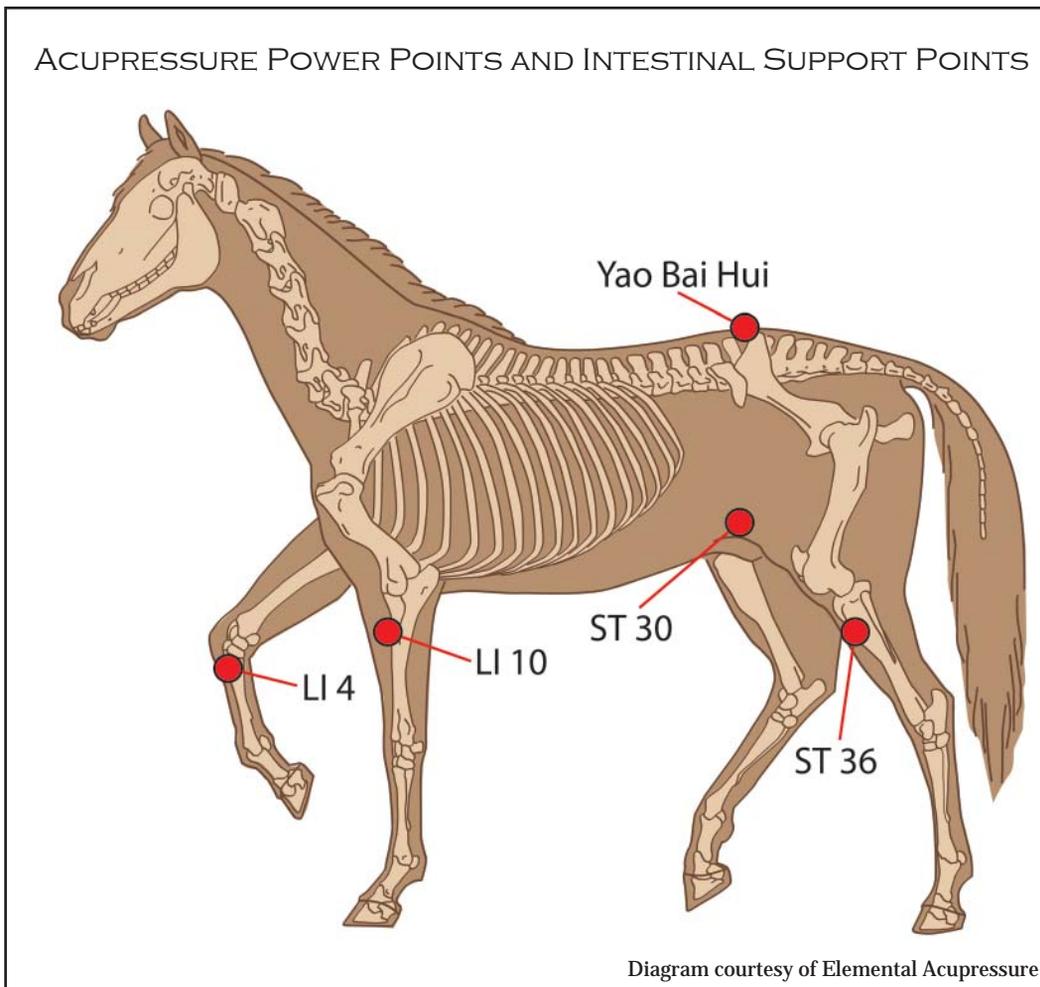


Diagram courtesy of Elemental Acupressure

nourish deeper health and build the horse's natural resistance to parasites.

Using TCM for parasite control yields additional side benefits. Horse lovers who use TCM often see their horses' digestion improve and notice that their horses are just plain healthier. The best news? With just a little guidance, acupressure lets you apply TCM in a way that is safe and easy for almost anyone.

The Acu-Deworming Sequence

Use the following acupressure deworming program to boost vital energy and strengthen the digestive and immune systems. For best results, use all five points regularly to supplement (**not replace!**) your current parasite management program.

This acupressure sequence is intended for a healthy horse. If your horse is weak or has a parasite infestation, consult with your holistic veterinarian **before** you proceed. A veterinary acupuncturist can customize the point selection and offer Chinese herbs specifically chosen for your horse's individual needs.

DO NOT USE THESE POINTS ON A PREGNANT MARE. Several of these points may interfere with pregnancy.

Acupressure Guidelines

Before you do the following acupressure sequence, locate each point on your horse. Be gentle and respectful while you explore. If the horse is sensitive at a point, stroke the area with a reassuring flat hand stroke, then move on.

When you are ready to do the acupressure sequence, follow this three-step sequence for each point:

- 1: stroke the area around the point with a relaxed flat hand stroke
- 2: apply gentle pressure to the point with your fingertips for 30-45 seconds
- 3: release pressure slowly and finish with flat hand strokes

When you finish one point, move to the next point and repeat the three-step sequence at the new location. When you are finished on one side of the body, repeat the sequence on the other side. The full sequence should take you only about 5 to 7 minutes; time well spent for intestinal health!

War and Peace:

Read about deworming practices in conventional advertisements and articles and you will notice repeated reference to military imagery, directing us to "wage war" on parasites. Traditional Chinese Medicine suggests a more peaceful approach. It encourages us to take responsibility for cultivating deeper health so that the body naturally radiates vitality and is less vulnerable to an infestation in the first place.

Worm warning: Worming is serious business! If you see these signs, call your vet and check parasite levels.

- 1: general poor health
- 2: dull coat / poor coat quality
- 3: unexplained weight loss
- 4: pot belly appearance
- 5: frequent colic
- 6: loose manure

Acupressure in Action: Visit this link to view a video demonstrating the point locations and basic acupressure information. www.elementalacupressure.com/en/c230/Acu-deworming.htm

Power Points

These points raise energy throughout the body, especially in the intestines and immune system. In a healthy horse, these points boost vitality, helping prevent parasite infestation. In a horse with a worm infestation, they invigorate health and help clear parasites from the body.

For a healthy horse, use these points once daily in the two days before and after the full moon along with your other deworming practices. For horses with a parasitic infestation, use the points 2-4 times per week during the rest of the month too.

Large Intestine 4

LI 4 lies on the inside surface of the front leg, immediately below the carpal joint (the "knee"), directly on the cannon bone. It sits in front of the small bump at the top of the splint bone called the "head" of the splint.

Large Intestine 10

LI 10 lies on the outside surface of the front leg about 1 hand's width from the height of the point of elbow. It lies in a muscle groove about ¼ the distance from the front to the back of the leg.

Yao Bai Hui

YBH lies directly on the midline of the back in a soft spot in front of the highest point of the croup just behind the level of the point of hip. Note that although most points lie on the right and left side of the body, there is only one YBH.

Intestinal Support Points

These points strengthen the digestive system. They optimize intestinal health and increase parasite resistance. These points also boost the body's basic energy levels and assist with numerous digestive symptoms including colic and abdominal bloat.

For healthy horses use the points once daily around the full moon. For horses with a weakened digestive system, use these points 2-4 times per week during the rest of the month too.

Stomach 36

ST 36 lies on the outside surface of the hind leg. It sits at the top of the curve of the gaskin, beneath a small bony bump marked in the photo. Note that ST 36 is only one finger's width from the front line of the leg.

Stomach 30

ST 30 lies on the outside of the flap of skin between the abdomen and the hind leg, above and forward from the stifle joint. Thank you to Dr. Isabella Busta DVM, CVA, CVFT for her help on this article. Dr. Busta works at the TierGesundheitsZentrum in Uzwil, Switzerland.

For more information:

Acupressure resources:

www.elementalacupressure.com/en/c133/Acu-How-to.htm
Articles and videos regarding acupressure for animals

Deworming resources:

The following links lead to articles regarding current deworming practices in horses.

1: "A Natural Approach to Parasite Control" by Lisa Ross-Williams: this article by a Natural Horse editor is very thorough. A great complement to this article! www.naturalhorsetalk.com/documents/ANaturalApproach-toParasiteControl.pdf

2: "Holistic Deworming" by Joyce Harman: this article by a top holistic vet is full of good information. harmanyequine.com/2010/12/holistic-deworming

3: "Parasite Control" by Barb Crabbe: discusses current ideas about what works and what doesn't in today's deworming practices. Conventional medicine viewpoint with an open mind. www.equestsearch.com/horses_care/health/deworming/parasite-control 

About the author:

Susan Tenney, CMT works internationally as a practitioner of Five Element Acupressure for animals. She teaches classes for animal lovers and offers an online certification program through her company Elemental Acupressure. Learn more about her courses, books and products at

www.ElementalAcupressure.com



Landmark Advance in Racehorse Welfare

October 26th, 2011 -

At a harness horse meeting of the Nordic group earlier this week in Helsinki, Finland, all four Nordic countries, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway approved the 'Harness Horse Bitless Bridle with bit bypass straps' for racing.

The approval follows two years of collaboration between Dr. Cook and a harness horse trainer in Sweden, Kerstin Kemlén. The first harness horse to race in the Dr. Cook BitlessBridle™ with bit bypass straps placed second at Bollnas Racetrack in Sweden on 11th September, 2011.

Dr. Robert Cook, USA
www.bitlessbridle.com
Kerstin Kemlén, Sweden
www.kerstinkemlen.se

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