



ACUPRESSURE AT-A-GLANCE

by Amy Snow and Nancy Zidonis

Tui Na

for balancing foal energy



Bladder meridian

You can participate in supporting your foal's health once he is around one to two months old. The first hours and weeks after his birth are critical mare-foal bonding times. It's best not to interfere with these early stages of the foal's development. Once he is starting to nibble hay and showing signs of independence from the mare, begin offering the foal a hands-on bodywork technique for balancing his energy.

What is Tui Na?

Tui Na is the original, ancient Chinese form of acupressure-massage and has been used continuously and extensively throughout China for over 2,000 years. Tui Na is pronounced "Tway" with a long "a" sound, followed by "Nah." It's based on Traditional Chinese Medicine theories and concepts, which promote healthy, balanced energy flow throughout the body. Tui Na techniques are gentle and non-invasive.

By employing one of the relatively superficial Tui Na techniques, you can help the foal build his muscles, bones, tendons and ligaments, plus contribute to his neurological development. Your intent must be to enhance the harmonious flow of vital substances such as energy, blood and other fluids throughout the foal's body.

Mo Fa is a circular rubbing technique. It's known to support the Kidney's ability to build bodily tissues; improve Stomach and Spleen function so the foal's entire body is well nourished; and provide a calming and comforting effect.


Applying Mo Fa

It's wise to begin the session by giving the mare attention. She can benefit from the Mo Fa as well. The happier the mare is with you, the more relaxed and available the foal will be.

When you feel the foal is comfortable and will accept your touch, you can begin a Tui Na session using the Mo Fa circular rubbing technique. Mo Fa can be performed along the foal's spine, starting behind the withers, continuing back toward the hindquarters, and ending before the foal's tail.

Start by gently placing the palm of your hand on the foal's back behind the withers to the side of his spine – not directly on his spine. Your opposite hand can rest comfortably near the foal's shoulder.

Keep your wrist and hand relaxed and use light pressure while slowly rotating your hand in a clockwise, circular motion. Rotate your working hand three times before moving one hands width back toward the foal's hindquarters. Continue down his back along the Bladder meridian, repeating the same flat-hand rotation. When you have completed one side, repeat Mo Fa on the opposite side of the foal's back.

Remember to be aware of the mare's attitude toward you as you work with her foal. You might have to stop and share the love and attention with her before continuing your session with the foal. 

Amy Snow and Nancy Zidonis are the authors of *Acu-Horse: A Guide to Equine Acupressure*, *Acu-Dog: A Guide to Canine Acupressure* and *Acu-Cat: A Guide to Feline Acupressure*. They founded Tallgrass, offering books, manuals, DVDs, apps, and meridian charts. Tallgrass also provides a 300-hour hands-on and online training program worldwide. It is an approved school for the Department of Higher Education Vocational Schools through the State of Colorado, and an approved provider of NCBTMB and NCCAOM Continuing Education. 303-681-3030, animalacupressure.com, tallgrass@animalacupressure.com