

Improve your horse's skin health with acupressure

By Amy Snow & Nancy Zidonis

Here's how performing regular acupressure sessions can promote the health of your horse's organs and improve his skin from the inside out.

Your horse's lustrous, shiny, healthy skin and coat come from inside out. In Chinese medicine, we know that when *chi* (life-promoting energy), blood and other vital substances are flowing harmoniously throughout the horse's body, we can see it on the surface of his body. A rich, shiny coat is a reflection of how well his internal organs are functioning.

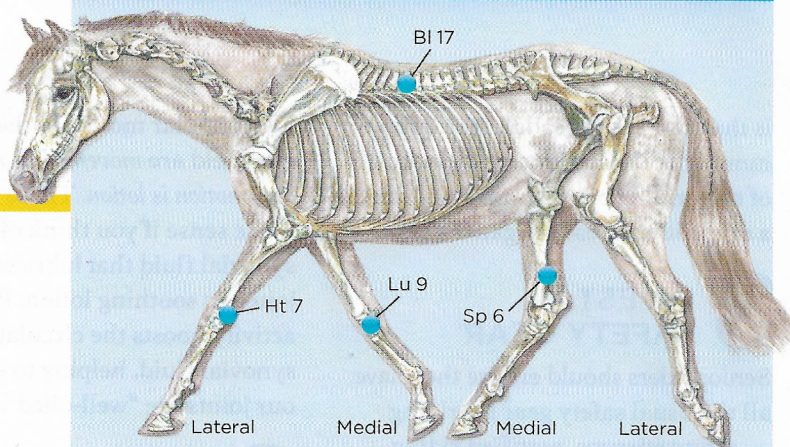
Skin is like a huge lung because it actually breathes and removes more gaseous toxins from the horse's body than his breath. Accounting for approximately 6% of the horse's overall body weight, skin is the intermediary organ between the environment and the underlying tissues and organs. As an essential component of the animal's immune system, the skin is the first line of defense from the elements.

Unfortunately, horses often fall prey to adverse skin conditions such as allergic reactions to insect bites, fungal and/or bacterial infections due to environmental factors, as well as more serious skin cancers. Additionally, stress, over-clipping, and lack of grooming can impact our horses' skin health. As horse guardians, it is up to us to be constantly vigilant and aware of how our horses' skin and coats look and feel. Watch for bumps, lumps, rashes, infections and dry skin — these are telltale signs that your horse's skin is compromised.

A WHOLE BODY PERSPECTIVE

In accord with Chinese medicine pathology, the Lung is directly responsible for the health of the skin. However, all of the organs must be functioning properly and optimally to support the Lung's capacity to maintain the skin's strength, moisture, and flexibility, needed to protect the body from external elements.

For instance, the Heart must circulate warm, nutrient-rich, moist blood to the surface of the horse's body to nourish the



NOURISHING SKIN ACUPRESSURE

- Lu 9** — Located in the middle of the medial aspect of the foreleg, on the radial side of the carpus, between the 1st and 2nd row of carpal bones. Just cranial to the accessory carpal bone.
- Ht 7** — Found on the caudolateral aspect of the radius, proximal to the accessory carpal bone.
- BI 17** — 3 cun lateral to the caudal border of the spinous process of the 12th thoracic vertebra, at the 12th intercostal space.
- Sp 6** — Found 3 cun above the tip of the medial malleolus.

skin. The Stomach, along with all the other organs along the gastrointestinal tract, has to break down food substances into bioavailable nutrients and body fluids to create blood for the Heart to generate warmth and circulation. The body is an integrated whole and each internal organ contributes to healthy skin in some manner.

AN ACUPRESSURE SESSION

After thousands of years of clinical observation, Traditional Chinese Medicine doctors determined that certain acupressure points, also called “acupoints,” are known to enhance the richness and circulation of blood to specifically nourish skin and superficial tissues. You can offer your horse an acupressure session using the “Nourishing Skin Acupressure” acupoint chart two times per week to support healthy, protective skin.

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 Animal Acupressure Resources offering books, manuals, DVDs, apps, meridian charts, and consulting services. Contact: 303-681-3030, animalacupressure.com, tallgrass@animalacupressure.com