

Hitting the trail this summer? Try these acupressure techniques to improve your horse's endurance and conditioning.

A photograph showing two people riding horses away from the camera down a dirt path. The rider on the left is wearing a pink shirt and the rider on the right is wearing a blue shirt. They are surrounded by dense green foliage and trees. The path leads towards a bright, open area in the distance.

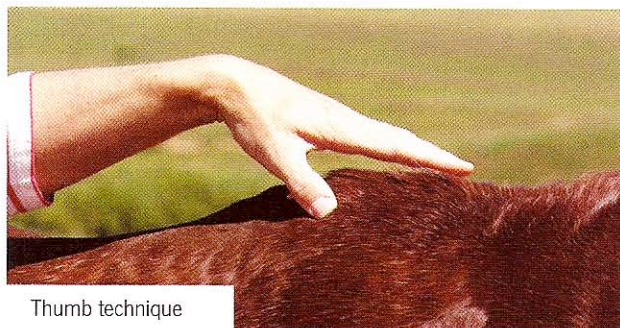
IDEAL FOR TRAIL
AND ENDURANCE RIDERS

equine wellness 57

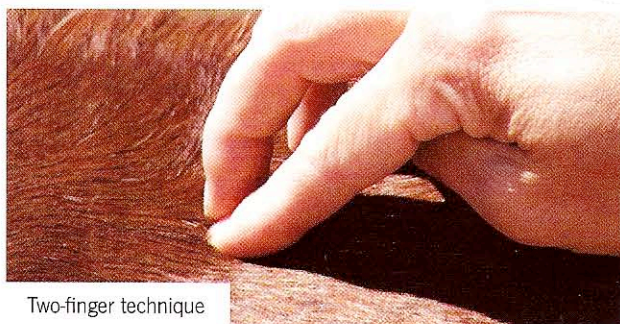
to considerable conditioning, and consistent acupressure sessions can greatly affect your horse's soundness and the outcome of a ride."

Offering your horse an acupressure session along with a fitness conditioning program will help enhance the flow of blood and Chi, life force energy (pronounced "Chee," also seen as "Qi"). By performing an acupressure session, you are actually:

- Balancing the flow of energy throughout your horse's body
- Boosting his immune system
- Reducing the potential for fatigue
- Increasing fluid in his joints to enhance flexibility
- Reducing any minor soreness or pain
- Sending more blood and nutrients to his four limbs
- Supporting his body's ability to regulate his temperature in relation to the external temperature



Thumb technique



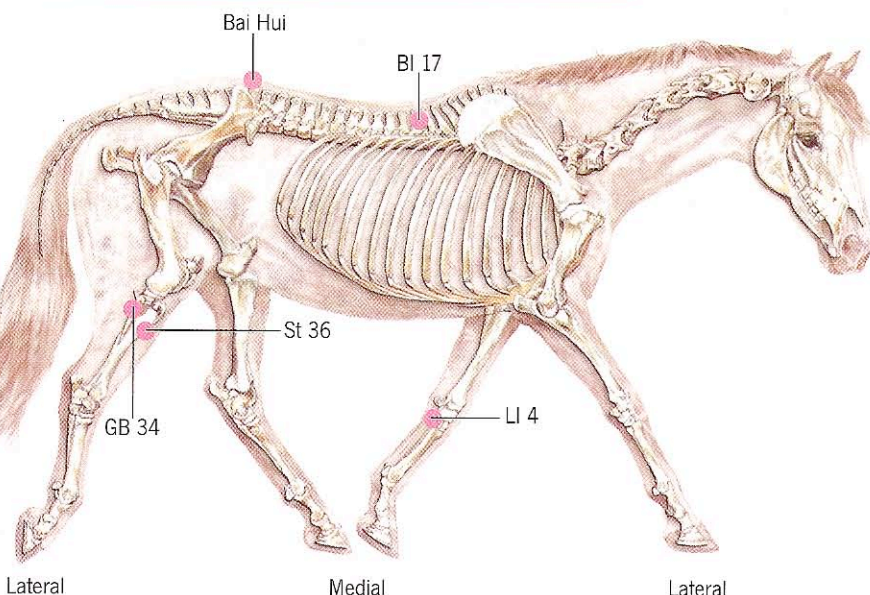
Two-finger technique

ACUPOINTS FOR ENDURANCE

STARTING YOUR SESSION

Begin by finding a location where you and your horse feel safe, and where there are few distractions. Slowly take three even breaths. Think about how you want to help your horse feel better – taking a moment to formulate the intent of your treatment is very important.

Begin by resting one hand near your horse's shoulder. Place the heel of your other hand just off the midline of his neck at the poll, and gently stroke down his neck. Continue stroking down his back to the hindquarters, staying to the side of the midline. Finish by stroking down the outside of his leg to the coronet band. Your opposite hand can trail along the same path, touching the horse lightly. Repeat this stroking procedure three times on each side of your horse.



POINT	LOCATION
Bai Hui	Located in the lumbosacral space.
BI 17	Found lateral to the spine, at the 12 th intercostal space.
St 36	One finger width from the head of the fibula, on the lateral side of the tibia.
GB 34	Located on the lateral aspect of the hind leg, at the space between the tibia and fibula.
LI 4	Found distal and medial to the head of the medial splint bone.

TRAIL POINTS

Now you are ready for point work. Rest one hand on your horse wherever it feels comfortable. You are going to perform the actual point work with the other hand. Use either the thumb or two-finger technique depending on what is most comfortable for you.

• **Thumb technique** – place the tip of your thumb directly on the acupressure point, also called the “acupoint,” and hold the point gently, but with intent, while counting slowly to 30.


• **Two-finger technique** – put your middle finger on top of your index finger and then place your index finger gently, but with intentional firmness, directly on the acupoint while counting slowly to 30.

Follow the accompanying chart (opposite page) during the point work segment of your treatment. Watch your horse's reaction. Healthy energy releases include yawning, deep breathing, stretching, muscle twitches, releases of air, and a softening of the eye. If your horse is overly reactive to a particular point or exhibits a pain reaction, stop holding that point and move on to the next. Try that point again during a later session to see if he is more comfortable.

FINAL NOTES

To complete your treatment session, rest your hand comfortably on the horse's shoulder. Place the heel of your other hand just off his poll and stroke down his neck. Continue over his back to his hindquarters, keeping your hand to the side of his spine and down the outside of his leg in exactly the same way you did to start the session. Your opposite hand can lightly trail along the same path. Repeat this procedure three times on each side of your horse. It can take 24 hours for the effects of an acupressure treatment to manifest.

When you take a break from the trail or at vet check during an endurance ride, use the

acupoints shown in the chart to give your horse that extra edge. He'll enjoy the ride, and you'll be more sure of hearing those glorious words from the vet: “Fit to continue!” 

AMY SNOW AND NANCY ZIDONIS ARE THE AUTHORS OF *Equine Acupressure: A Working Manual*. THEY OWN TALLGRASS PUBLISHERS, WHICH OFFERS ACUPRESSURE BOOKS, DVDs, AND MERIDIAN CHARTS FOR HORSES, DOGS, AND CATS. THEY ARE ALSO THE FOUNDERS OF TALLGRASS ANIMAL ACUPRESSURE INSTITUTE, WHICH PROVIDES HANDS ON AND ONLINE TRAINING COURSES WORLDWIDE, INCLUDING A PRACTITIONER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM. CONTACT 888-841-7211, ANIMALACUPRESSURE.COM OR INFO@ANIMALACUPRESSURE.COM.

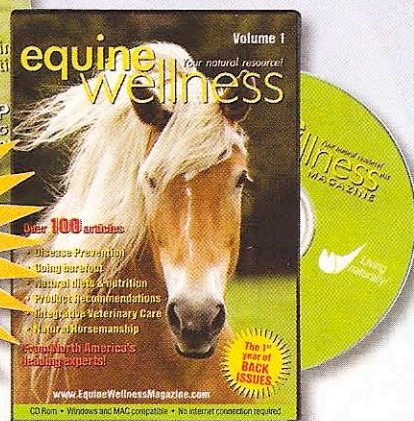
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