

THE *gift* OF EQUINE ACUPRESSURE

The holidays are coming up fast and there's always so much to prepare for. It can be a stressful time no matter how you celebrate, and everyone knows it, including your horses. This simple acupressure session can help your equine friends feel grounded and calm during this busy time of year.

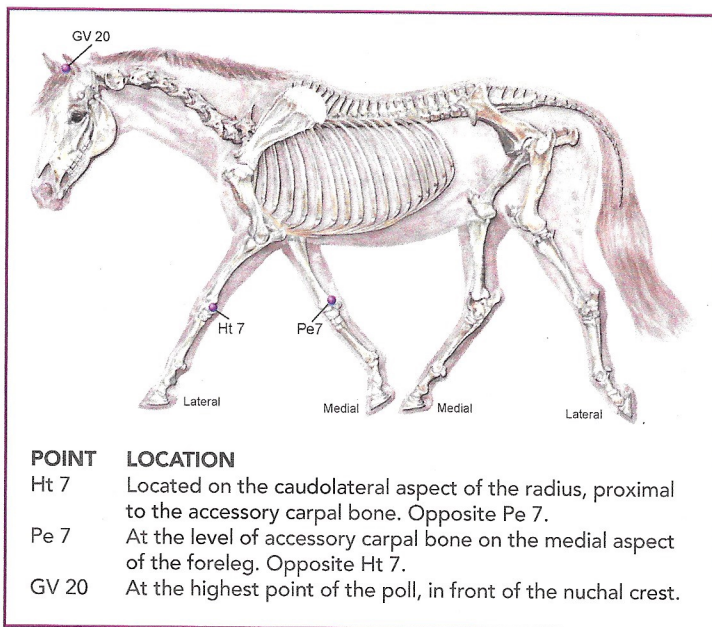
Horses are sensitive creatures. They are fully aware of how you are feeling when you enter the barn or walk out to catch them up. If you're happy and eager to go for a ride, your horse usually greets you with the same enthusiasm. When you're overwhelmed and stressed, he senses it and becomes anxious and stressed, too.

When you're feeling harried and your internal pressure thermostat is rising, your horse is feeling every bit of that pressure. It's time for you to relax and give him the gift of an acupressure session. You need it as much as he does!

GETTING STARTED

Every acupressure session starts with you feeling grounded and centered. When you are stressed, your to-do list is probably racing through your mind, so begin the session by taking three deep breaths. Inhale slowly through your nose and exhale slowly through your mouth down to the bottom of your breath. Take the time to breathe fully and focus on each breath. Just let go of everything that's driving you. While you are breathing, visualize how you can relax and share a half-hour of connected healing time with your horse. This is your time together.

Specific acupressure points, called "acupoints," help clear the mind and calm the spirit when they are stimulated. Interestingly enough, while you are stimulating these acupoints on your horse and spending this special time together, you are receiving equal benefit. In offering this caring work to your horse, you become the recipient as well.



Governing Vessel 20 (GV 20) has the attribute of helping to clear the mind and calm the spirit. It is called "Heaven's Gate" because it is located on the very top of the horse's head between his ears and is the "closest place to heaven". Most horses enjoy having GV 20 scratched for a minute or so. You can begin and finish your acupressure session with this acupoint.

Pericardium 7 (Pe 7) and Heart 7 (Ht 7) are two powerful acupoints known to reduce anxiety and calm the spirit. These two points can be stimulated simultaneously because they are located opposite each other just above the carpus (knee) on your horse's foreleg. You can place the soft tip of your thumb on one side and your pointer and middle fingers on the other. Hold these acupoints for a slow count to 20 or longer. Once you have completed these points on one side of your horse, repeat them on the opposite side.

You both deserve the gift of acupressure during this special but stressful time of year. To give and receive makes for a happier, healthier holiday season!