



ACUPUNCTURE: HOW IT HELPS MANAGE PAIN IN CANCER PATIENTS



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NATUROPATHIC ONCOLOGY

Why integrative veterinarians are perfectly positioned to diagnose, treat and help prevent cancer.



HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY

Learn how it decreases inflammation, helps with healing, mobilizes stem cells and more.



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Why innovative new therapies are showing promise.



WHAT'S NEW

- New research quantifies health benefits of human/animal bond
- Top 5 health issues in small dogs
- Research into equine tendon injuries looks at proteins



How offering acupressure and other alternative modalities can **BENEFIT** your clinic as well as your patients

by Jill Golgosky, BS, CVT, CAAP

A growing number of clients are requesting alternative therapies for their pets, and more veterinarians are realizing that offering multiple approaches can better help animals. As a result, our role as CVTs is becoming increasingly important. As a veterinary technician, you can demonstrate the effectiveness of holistic modalities, increase revenue to the hospital, and even create your own business within the clinic.

Ten years ago, I started working at a small animal clinic. The veterinarian I worked with offered alternative modalities. She practiced conventional medicine, but was also trained in Cranio Sacral Therapy (CST) and Nambudripad Allergy Elimination Techniques (NAET). I was able to speak freely about acupressure and other modalities, and we had a strong client base that specifically came to the clinic for these therapies.

When I applied for a veterinary technician job at a specialty hospital four years later, the internal medicine doctor who was interviewing me saw that I was certified in equine and small animal acupressure, and requested I not tell clients about this modality. Over the past few years, however, there has been a distinct, though not complete, shift in perception at my hospital. When I started, I had to be a sort of “undercover acupressurist”. I used acupressure points during the sedation process to help animals transition more smoothly and quickly during the excitatory phase. In preparing a dog for an ultrasound procedure, I was able to reduce his anxiety by using specific calming points. Other veterinary technicians as well as the doctors began to notice and asked what I was doing. They became interested because they could see how effective the acupressure was.

Nowadays, I have the opportunity to provide acupressure sessions for clients, as long as my other work is covered. The doctors can see how acupressure helps the animals. After I worked with an allergic Airedale, for example, his medication dosage was decreased from six tablets twice a day to half a tablet twice a day. In another case, the doctors planned to place a Greyhound on numerous painkillers when she suffered a hip injury after falling down stairs. Two acupressure sessions later, the dog walked without a limp and was able to go up and down stairs again with no drugs.

While every clinic is different, younger doctors seem more open to offering acupressure, rehabilitation, and other modalities, so these may be the ones to begin educating about the holistic skills you have. [Associate Editor's note: Across the US, both new and experienced veterinarians seem equally attracted to holistic options.] As time progresses, I'm seeing a change in thought that's leading us toward the acceptance of a wider scope of medicine and a more integrative approach to veterinary care.

POTENTIAL FOR CVT HOLISTIC SERVICES IN YOUR PRACTICE

- Expanding CVT services can enhance patient health and clinic income. Although I'm seeing an increasing receptivity to acupressure and other complementary care possibilities, the owners of my practice are choosing not to charge clients for the additional service; hence, they are not paying me anything beyond my regular salary. Yet it would be ideal if I could offer an acupressure clinic within the practice. We see so many patients with acute issues such as broken legs, torn ACLs, and gastroenteritis; acupressure could assist in their recovery and the clients charged, possibly with a portion coming to me. Other patients dealing with chronic and terminal diseases such as kidney failure, cancer, congestive heart failure, and endocrine issues could receive a better quality of life, increased longevity, and comfort care through acupressure. Hospice care is increasingly requested by clients and these patients can benefit from many integrative modalities.

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SPECIFIC ACUPRESSURE POINTS

Acupressure, like all modalities, can be individualized. Or, you can begin with points “for a condition”. The following are a few that seem to help a wide range of animals.

- 1. Anxious or stressed dogs:** Ht 7 and Pe 7 (which can be worked together) and CV 17. My coworkers have even commented on how the patients’ eyes have softened while in the clinic.
- 2. Post op points:** Bl 60, Ki 3, and Sp 21.
- 3. Immune mediated diseases, strengthening immune systems:** Li 4, Li 11, St 36 and Sp 6.
- 4. Dogs that are seizing in conjunction with medical management:** Ht 7, Liv 3 and Bl 18.

Acupressure and other modalities also have much to offer animals during hospice care. There are acupressure points that can increase the patient’s quality of life, sometimes extend his life, or allow him to pass more easily and comfortably. Some points are individually selected according to the symptoms and the animal’s unique characteristics, while others are more standard. In one example, a dog near death was having difficulty breathing, and the owner had stipulated “Do Not Resuscitate” (DNR). I gently applied two acupressure points and in less than 30 seconds, the dog’s breathing relaxed; he took two deep breaths and was gone.

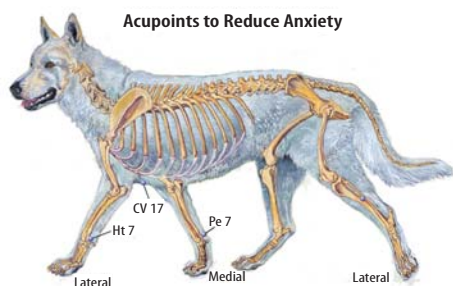


The author performs acupressure on a canine patient. This modality has many applications that veterinary technicians can make use of.

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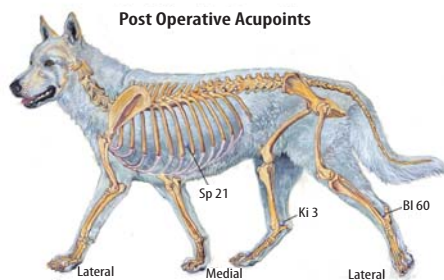
- Another possibility would be to have a separate or partner clinic to provide these services, through a financial agreement with the hospital. The practice laws governing what technicians can do are different in every state, so the legislation needs to be considered before presenting a plan to your hospital. Most hospice programs already offer veterinary technician house calls as part of the service, and being able to do acupressure and other modalities can be an added benefit.
- A brief internet search shows veterinary websites that list the holistic certifications of their technicians, but don’t mention acupressure and massage in the services offered. Changing this would increase traffic to the hospital as people Google “acupressure pet care”. Listing these options in the services dropdown menu, describing the modalities, and including case examples will also bring in new clients.

As I continue to offer acupressure to our patients, I think even the most skeptical doctors will be able to see the value of giving animals a broader array of medical options. After all, we all share the same goal – to provide animals with optimal healthcare. Integrating holistic and traditional medicine gives animals the best of both worlds, and my main goal is to provide the best care to our patients. **IVC**



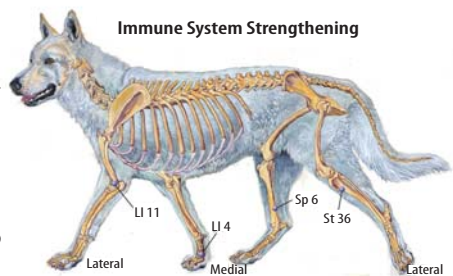
Acupoints to Reduce Anxiety

Points	Location
Ht 7	Found at the transverse crease of the carpal joint, in depression lateral to flexor carpi ulnaris. Opposite Pe 7.
Pe 7	Caudal to the tendon of the flexor carpi radialis and directly above the carpal bone.
CV 17	On ventral midline, at the level of the caudal border of the elbow, 4 th intercostal space.



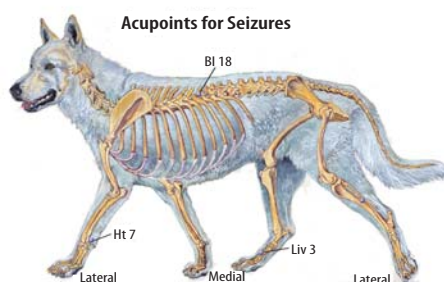
Post Operative Acupoints

Points	Location
Sp 21	Found on lateral aspect of the chest at about the 7 th intercostal space, same level as the point of shoulder.
Bl 60	Caudolateral aspect of hind limb, at the thin, fleshy tissue at the hock, opposite Ki 3.
Ki 3	In a depression between medial malleolus of the tibia and calcaneal tendon. Opposite Bl 60.



Immune System Strengthening

Points	Location
Li 4	At the webbing of the dew claw.
Li 11	With the elbow bent, the point is found at the lateral end of the cubital crease.
St 36	Located just lateral to the tibial crest on the outside of the hind leg.
Sp 6	Found 3 cun above the tip of the medial malleolus on the caudal border of the tibia.



Acupoints for Seizures

Points	Location
Ht 7	Found at the transverse crease of the carpal joint, in depression lateral to flexor carpi ulnaris. Opposite Pe 7.
Bl 18	1.5 cun lateral to the caudal border of the dorsal spinous process of the 10 th thoracic vertebra.
Liv 3	Above Liv 2, between 2 nd and 3 rd metatarsal bones at the junction of the metatarsophalangeal joint.