

Truly Healing Touch

Use the "Surrounding the Dragon" technique to help your dog heal.

BY AMY SNOW AND NANCY ZIDONIS

Maintaining a well-rounded training regime and providing incremental warm-up exercise before strenuous exercise are an important part of preventing injuries. But with any sport, the dog's enthusiasm and natural drive can lead to incidental and repetitive injuries, despite our best prevention efforts. That's why it's best to formulate an approach to dealing with our dog's injuries, *before* they happen.

With an injury that is severe and/or debilitating, a holistic veterinarian should be consulted immediately to diagnose the extent of the damage and prescribe treatment. Soft tissue injuries in particular can be deceiving, so have a veterinarian check your dog to be sure that no other issues or further tissue damage occurs.

After the holistic vet has seen your dog and made the necessary recommendations



Dogs who compete in fast-paced sports like agility may suffer injuries a few times in their careers. But ordinary active dogs may, too! Enforcing a slow warm-up period before strenuous exercise can help, but not entirely prevent injuries.

What you can do . . .

- Have a holistic veterinarian examine your dog after any injury that debilitates your dog. More damage than meets the eye could have occurred, requiring surgery or other immediate treatment.
- Watch your dog during your acupressure session. If he grows uncomfortable, stop that touch and try some points on the other side of his body, or try another session later that day.
- Concentrate on your "healing intention" for your dog while you work. Empty your mind of other distractions.



or if the injury is a simple bruise or superficial abrasion, you can help expedite the healing process. Only the animal's body can heal itself – but you can play a role in helping to create the physical "environment" in which healing can take place in a balanced, healthy manner.

Healing with acupressure

Acupressure, like acupuncture, is based on traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) concepts that have helped heal animals and humans alike for more than 3,000 years. The basic principle underlying the healing process is that vital substances of the body nourish the body while moving harmoniously throughout the body. Two of the vital substances are *chi* (or *qi*), which is life-promoting energy, and *blood*, a nutrient-rich body fluid. In TCM, *blood* includes both the blood as identified in conventional medicine and other body fluids, such as synovial fluids in the joints or the nutrient-

rich fluid within the spinal column.

Any injury can cause disruption in the flow of *chi* and *blood*. Using acupressure points, also called "acupoints," you can help re-establish the flow of *chi* and *blood* through an injured area thus creating the healing environment. The movement of *chi* and *blood* through the damaged tissue helps distribute the nutrients the body needs to heal quickly and well.

Surrounding the Dragon

"Surrounding the Dragon" is an acupoint selection technique that is specifically for enhancing the flow of *chi* and *blood* to and through a particular location on the body. This technique is used often as an effective tool for tendon and ligament joint injuries as well as for chronic issues such as arthritis and tendonitis.

The "Dragon" is the painful, raging injury, arthritic joint, or site of scar tissue formation, which blocks the flow of *chi* and

blood. Applying gentle pressure to specific acupoints surrounding the “offended” area stimulates the flow of the healing *chi* and *blood* while removing toxins and nourishing the tissues.

When Surrounding the Dragon, we stimulate acupoints located near – but not too close to – the insulted area because you do not want to “spank the crying baby.” This phrase is used in Chinese medicine to mean that you do not want to cause any further hurt when the area is already painful.

Acupoints and technique

The photos below provide acupressure point combinations that address injuries or issues related to the shoulder and hip. All of the acupoints identified are considered “local” points and directly address bringing *chi* and *blood* to the identified joint.

Surrounding the Dragon can bring more *chi* and *blood* to the afflicted area

whether it is an injury, scarring, or a chronic problem. These acupoint combinations can support the healing process, help reduce pain, and bring more flexibility to the limb. It’s an additional healing tool you can use when your dog suffers from a knock, repetitive injury, or twist, and you have followed your veterinarian’s recommendations.

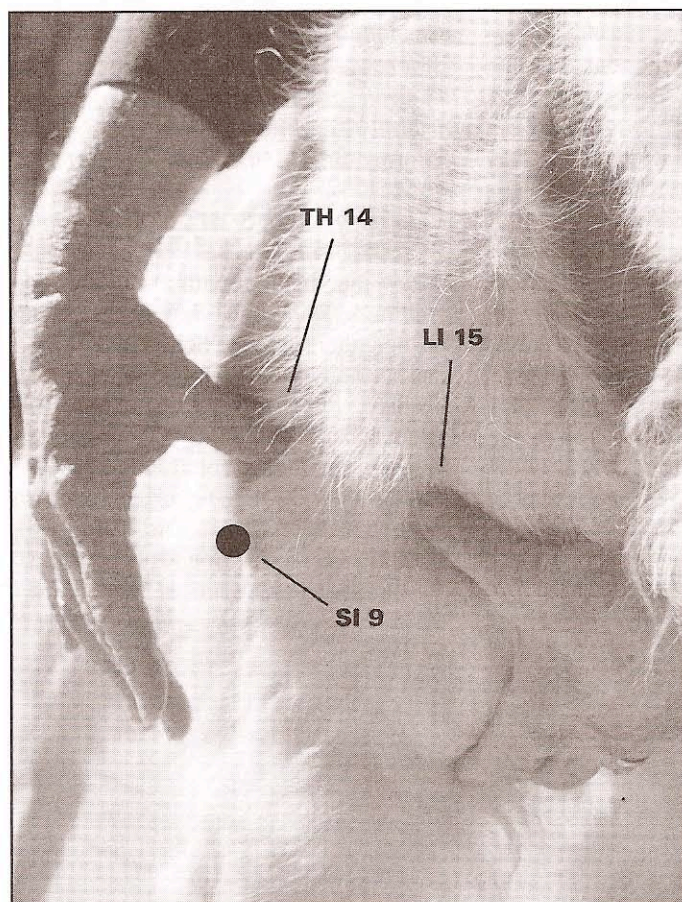
Points that surround the injured area can be stimulated simultaneously or in succession, one acupoint at a time. By stimulating a point, we simply mean applying gentle pressure the point with the soft, fleshy portion of the tip of your fingers and thumb.

Gently place your fingers on the acupoints shown in the photos below, while holding your intentions to relieve the dog’s discomfort in the forefront of your mind. You do not have to apply much pressure since this is energetic work, not manipulation of tissue.

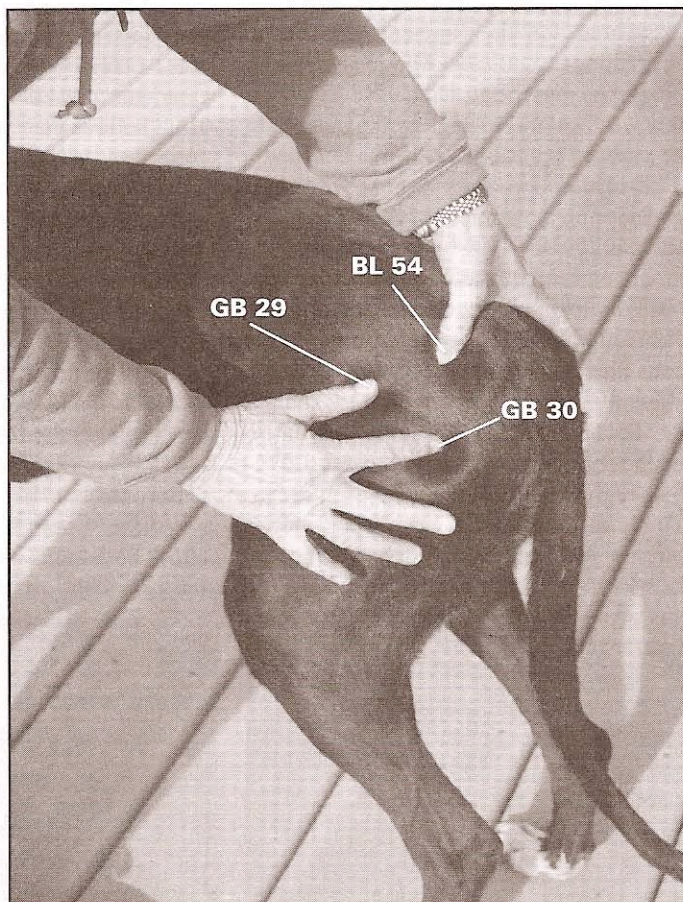
Continue your contact with the point while counting slowly to 30, or until the dog moves away or demonstrates some form of release. Energetic releases can include yawning, licking his lips, stretching, passing gas, demonstrating the need to move, or even falling asleep.

Remember to repeat this procedure on both sides of the dog. If the dog gives any indication of pain, stop immediately and work the points on the other side of the dog. If the dog continues to be uncomfortable, try again at a later date when the dog is not as sensitive. 🐾

Amy Snow and Nancy Zidonis are the authors of animal acupressure texts, including The Well-Connected Dog: A Guide To Canine Acupressure; and Acu-Cat: A Guide to Feline Acupressure. For more information about them or the numerous acupressure information resources they offer, see “Resources,” page 24.



It’s helpful to stimulate the following acupoints when your dog has any problem with his shoulder: TH 14, which is found at the shoulder, on the back edge of the deltoid muscle. Just below that, SI 9 is found in the large depression at the back edge of the deltoid muscle. LI 15 is in front of and above the acromion (the summit of the shoulderblade) and on the forward edge of the deltoid muscle.



These points, used when the dog has an acute injury or chronically sore hips, have been described as the “three bowling ball points” around the head of the femur: GB 29, located in a depression just in front of the greater trochanter (large bony protuberance) of the femur; BL 54, found just above that bony protuberance; and GB 30, found in a depression below and behind the greater trochanter.



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