

Acupressure for Acute Laminitis

practical approaches for
equine metabolic support



a Five Element resource from:
ElementalAcupressure.com

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Welcome!

to your Laminitis Resource

W H O A M I ?



Hi and welcome to the wonderful world of Five Element Theory for helping horses with metabolic issues like laminitis.

My name is Susan Tenney. I've been teaching Five Element acupressure, shiatsu, EnergyWork™, and Classical East Asian Medicine to help animals for over thirty years. It's my mission to put the magic and power of acupressure and the Five Elements into the hands of ALL animal lovers from bodyworkers of elite equestrian performers to caretakers of shelter rescues and everything in between.

In the past three decades I've also seen the Elemental Matrix Method™ benefit horses with laminitis and other metabolic issues. I have seen it applied by all manner of horse pro - bodyworkers, trainers, hoof care specialists, vets and beyond - so we KNOW that anyone who can PAT a horse can apply the acupressure to help.

We take our Certification Program students through every aspect of this topic in their journey to graduation, but you can get started here to help horses in the first acute stages of a laminitic flare. If this is your first step with us - welcome and we hope it helps the horses in your care.

Inside you'll find info about the three acupoints I suggest for the first days of laminitis, acupressure instructions, and more.

Once you've had a try with this material let us know how it goes! We'd love to hear your story!



Susan Tenney, CMT

Co-Founder, Elemental Acupressure

YouTube Resources

This PDF is loaded with information about helping horses with acute laminitis. We'll even show you how to do the acupressure and then tip you off to where to next.

But reading is only PART of our resource bundle. I've filmed a video to take you through many of the ideas in this PDF resource. If you found this PDF through YouTube, then maybe you've already watched the companion video. But if you've found this resource in another way, be SURE to use the link below to access the video we have on this topic. It will round out the discussion and fill in some spaces not covered in the text on the next pages.

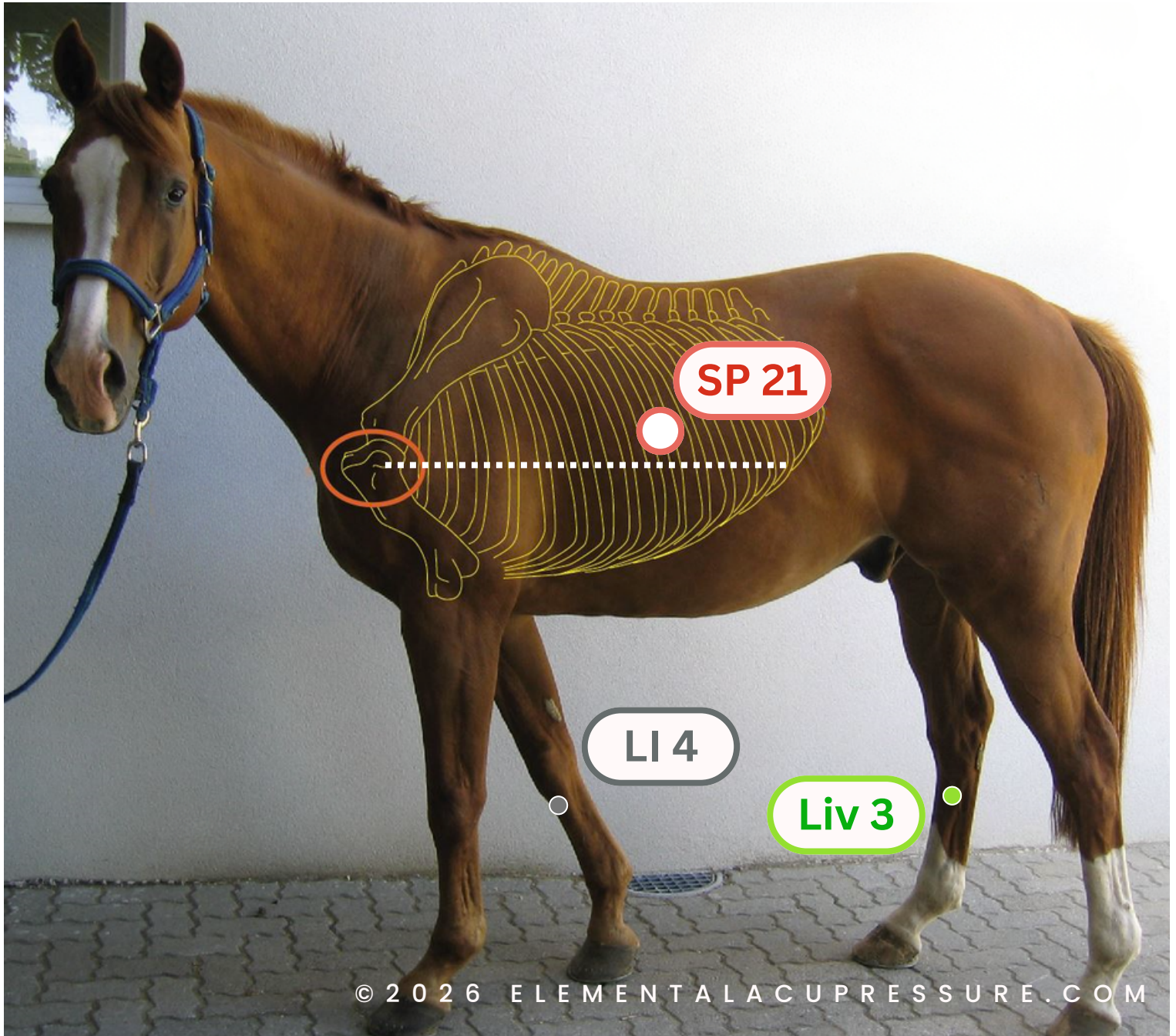
Access the video [HERE](#)



Beyond the video above we're building a full [YouTube Playlist](#) of videos on metabolic health for animals. Each one will share Five Element ideas and acupressure points that you can put into practice. So when you head over to the video be sure to follow our channel so that every time we load more videos and PDF resources you're notified. There are so many more topics to come including: **acupressure for horses past the most acute stage, acupressure for PPID, acupressure for horses who DON'T have a predominant Earth Element constitution,** and more. We'll also cover **acupressure for dogs and cats with metabolic issues like diabetes, obesity, and even cognitive decline** which is being linked to metabolic conditions too. So subscribe so you don't miss a thing.



Three Point Combo for Acute Laminitis in Horses



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Use the points regularly for **30-180 sec per point per side** for horses who aren't pregnant. If accepted by the horse **use daily if possible for one week as tolerated**. 2-3x daily in short sessions is great if possible.

[See Video Here](#) for general acupressure instructions. Detailed point instructions in the next pages

[Watch our safety video HERE](#) and be SURE to use this position when working on horses in pain.

See more info on [No Pressure Acupressure™](#) page 10 if the horse is touch avoidant.

Why Acupressure?

If the horse in your care has the signs of acute laminitis, there are many reasons for using acupressure as part of the care protocol once you have your veterinarian's approval.

- **Basic Acupressure is simple** so anyone who can pat their horse can do it with just a few moments of learning.
- **Acupressure is effective.** (See studies on following page)
- **Acupressure is fast** - you can activate the points in this PDF on both sides of the body in 3-10 minutes.
- **Acupressure feels good to most horses** so it's a way to connect with a horse while they are going through the ordeal that is acute laminitis. This is particularly good for a horse who is getting cranky after days of invasive handling and medical care or a horse who is deeply stressed by pain. Unlike some parts of the laminitis care routine, acupressure is usually welcomed by the horse.
- If a horse resists acupressure or any touch you can still activate the points with **No Pressure Acupressure™** (pg. 10)
- **Acupressure gives you something to do** instead of feeling powerless, anxious, and helpless.
- **If you are an equine professional**, knowing acupressure will undoubtedly come in handy in the course of your career. And you don't have to be a vet to be able to really help. You'll be actively moving those horses back to action so they can continue with whatever you do with or for them.
- **You can also teach these points to your clients** and be seen as a source of solutions and empowerment for them during a stressful and difficult time.

Need Proof Acu Works?

There is a TON of evidence now to prove the efficacy of acupoint work for a wide range of conditions in humans and animals. Of those studies there are even some that are specifically about using acupoints for laminitis. I have included a few of them below.

Just know that there are also a TON of studies about the points in this PDF, especially LI 4 for which there are countless studies showing how useful it is for a wide range of conditions. But for this document I focused on studies related to laminitis. Feel free to head to a search engine to checkout additional studies yourself.

From 2025: Effectiveness of acupuncture for equine laminitis: Systematic review and meta-analysis

<https://veterinaryworld.org/Vol.18/January-2025/7.php>

Positive Response to acupuncture treatment in horses with chronic laminitis

<https://europepmc.org/article/pmc/5508962>

Effectiveness of acupuncture for equine laminitis: This meta-analysis study reported that acupuncture improves horses with laminitis and has a favorable effect (multiple studies on this page)

<https://www.westernu.edu/faramarzi/reports.html>

Effectiveness of acupuncture for equine laminitis: Systematic review and meta-analysis <https://integrativedryneedling.com/effectiveness-of-acupuncture-for-equine-laminitis-systematic-review-and-meta-analysis>

Electroacupuncture was used to treat lameness in horses and ponies with chronic laminitis or navicular disease <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC1255553>

Using acupuncture and electroacupuncture in the treatment of laminitis in racing horses a comparative study <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348141462>

E.A.Sy. Acupressure

The **E**lemental **A**cupressure **S**ystem makes point work simple, safe, and effective. Of course you can advance to more subtle and sophisticated skills in our online courses but the **E.A.SY.** approach makes acupressure as simple as **A-C-U.**

A ssess your situation

If the horse in your care has the signs of acute laminitis, it is likely that NEITHER of you is in an ultra-calm, relaxed state that is ideal for an acupressure session. To create the best environment for your session you'll want to assess:

- **Have you called the vet and have they given you permission to use point work?**
This is **ALWAYS** your first step if you've discovered that a horse has laminitis.
- **Is the horse resisting touch?** If yes use the special technique on **page 10.**
- **Are YOU calm enough to work carefully?** If not you might need to do some relaxation, grounding, or breathing exercises first.
- **Is your spot peaceful?** If not then consider moving to a spot without distractions.

C hoose your point

Select a point (or points) from this guide and from the other guides in the following modules of this Resource Hub.

U tilize your E.A.Sy. Acu skills

- 1: Slowly stroke the region with a soft flat hand. Breathe deeply.
- 2: Gently apply gentle pressure with your fingertips to the point slowly and softly.
- 3: Hold for 10-60 seconds or until it feels right.
- 4: When you or your animal feel done, slowly release your pressure
- 5: Finish with more flat hand strokes.

**Before you start: Please read
the Common Sense Cautions on the next page!**

E.A.Sy. Acu Tips

In the PDFs in your Resource Hub we share our fave acupoints for horses, dogs, and cats. Want MORE? [Go HERE for relaxation points](#) for all three species.

Once you've used the instructions on the next pages to activate a single point, what next?

- Do another point from this guide on the same side **OR**
- Repeat the point on the other side **OR**
- Finish for the day: ***Yes, a session can be just one point***

- ★ If the horse is responsive you can do 2-3 sessions in a day but then keep the sessions short i.e.: 3-15 minutes
- ★ Repeat daily if possible for the first week depending on your horse's response. Then taper off to 1-3x per week.
- ★ After the acute pain has lessened, progress to longer-term point protocols (covered in a later video + PDF).

common sense cautions below!

✓ **Always use acupressure ALONG WITH medical care from your veterinarian.**

✓ **A note about pregnant animals and those with medical issues: Get your veterinarian's go ahead before starting!**

No Pressure Acupressure™

If the horse avoids or even refuses touch, you can STILL do the points. No Pressure Acupressure™ is the no-touch version of acupressure and it can work beautifully in times like this!

If a laminitic horse is feeling overwhelmed by pain, anxiety, or a lot of handling, touch-based acupressure can feel invasive and overly stimulating to the horse's already overloaded sensory system. There IS a way forward.

Use No Pressure Acupressure™ which leans into the energetic aspect of point work. By simply holding your hand OVER the point, a sensitive horse often receives just as much benefit as when you touch the point.

You can even stand at a distance and hold your hands out, “sending” energy (qi) to the points. While this may seem incredible we have seen it work again and again. And for the super sensitive horse - like one with acute pain - it can be a game changer.

Before you dismiss this technique, give it a try. Our students (and the animals in their care) LOVE it!

[Check out the mini-course HERE](#)

About Let It Go (LI 4)

One of the single most powerful points for relieving pain and stress.

CAUTION: Do not use during pregnancy. OK to use post-pregnancy.



Let It Go (LI 4) is known to be one of THE most powerful points on the horse's body.

It is hugely effective for addressing a wide range of issues but for here we'll use it for **reducing pain, relieving emotional stress, and clearing the body of metabolic byproducts created during a laminitis flare.**

This point can be used alone or in combination with the next point, Dynamic Balance (Liv 3). Together these two points make up the **Four Gates Protocol**. Why Four? Because both points have a right and a left point so there are four points total. The Four Gates are used to clear the body of pain, unwanted substances (like toxins), as well as unwanted emotions. They make a "clean slate" of the body and the body's energetic patterns which is great for a horse in laminitic pain who wants some relief. You'll find instructions for the second point, Liv 3, below.

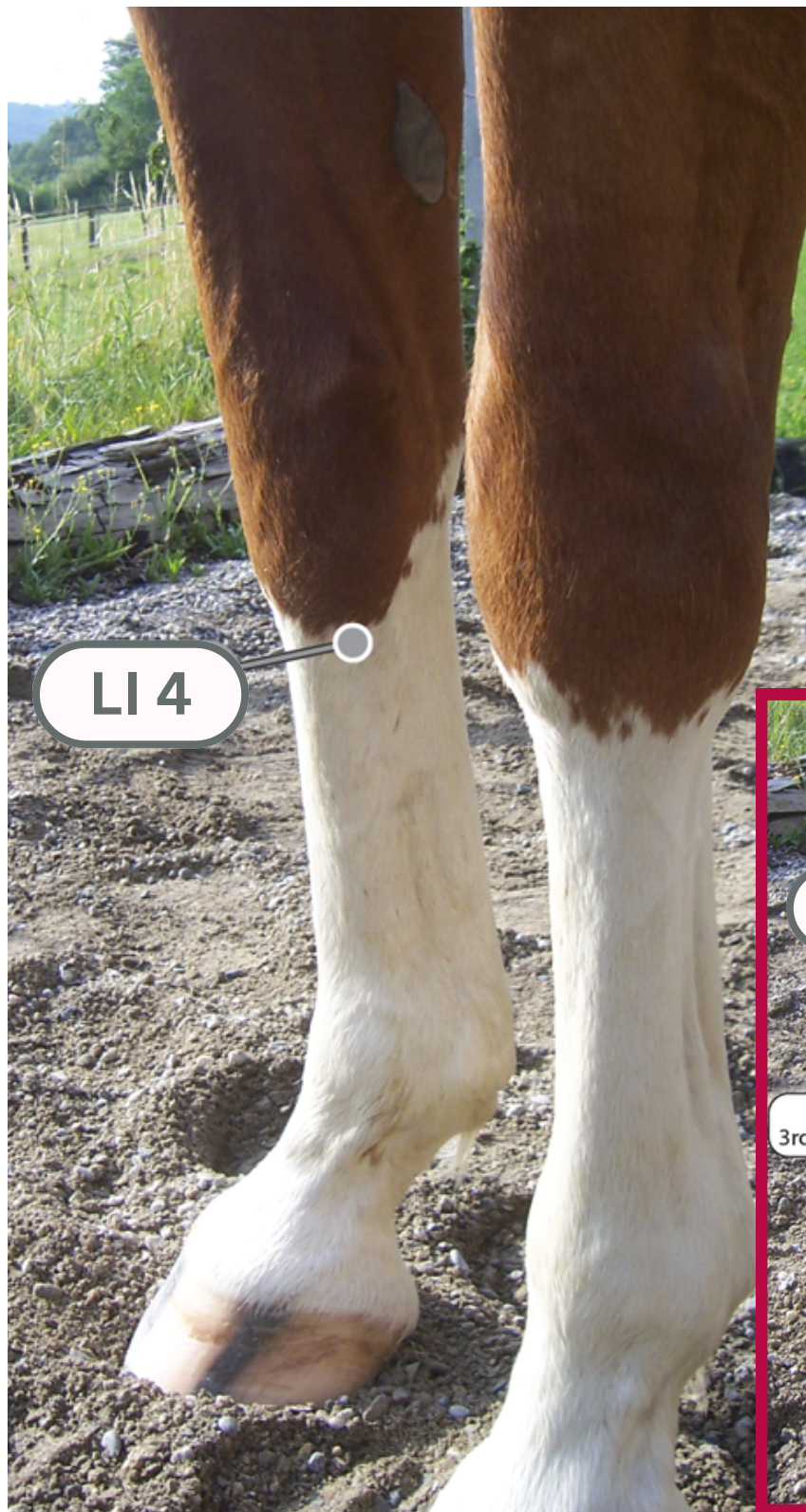
[See Video Here](#) for general acupressure instructions. Let It Go (LI 4) instructions on next page.

Note my other hand over the cannon bone. This is a safety precaution that should be used ANY TIME you work on the lower leg. While this point is not usually that reactive, a horse with acute laminitis can be very sensitive. Using the safety position like this is just good common sense.

[Watch our safety video HERE](#)

Finding Let It Go (LI 4)

CAUTION: Do not use during pregnancy. OK to use post-pregnancy.

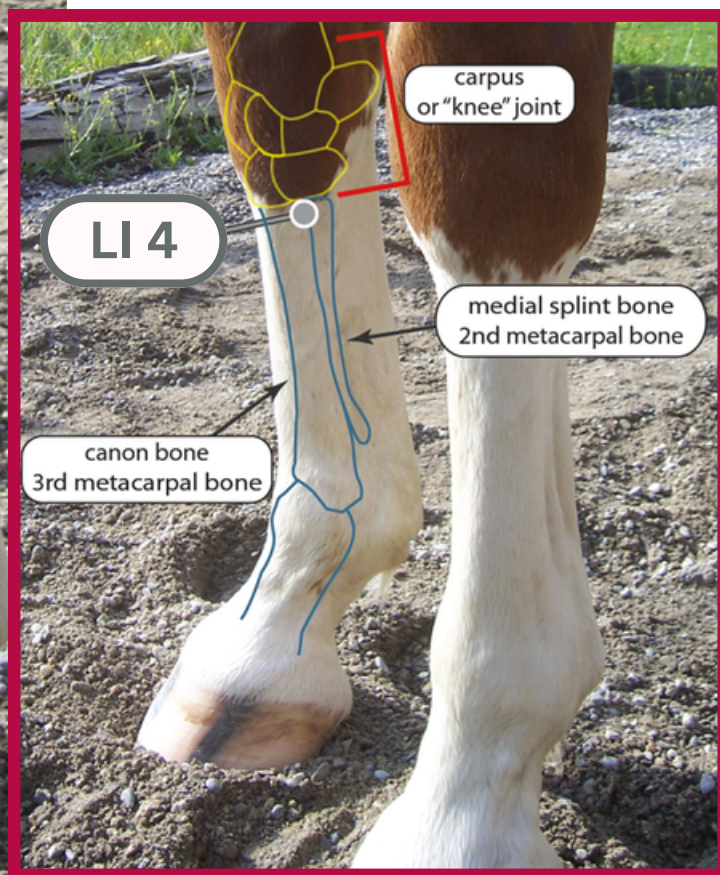


This point lies immediately below the bones of the front “knee” joint (carpus).

It sits **on the cannon bone** and **in front of the inside splint bone**.

Some sources place this point behind the cannon bone but we have had consistently better results in front.

Note that it is VERY far forward, only slightly back from the front line of the foreleg. If you are at the midpoint of the inside surface, you are too far back.



About Dynamic Balance (Liv 3)

A powerful point for relieving pain and reducing inflammation in the hoof capsule.

CAUTION: Do not use during pregnancy. OK to use post-pregnancy.



Dynamic Balance (Liv 3) is another powerhouse point for pain. It is also hugely effective for inflammation, blood circulation, reducing stress in the body, and clearing the body of metabolic byproducts created during a laminitis flare.

Use the point regularly for 30-180 sec per side for horses who aren't pregnant. This point is great on its own but even stronger when used in the **Four Gates Protocol combination with Let It Go (LI 4)** described above on page 11.

[See Acupressure Video Here](#) for general acupressure instructions. Additional Liv 3 instructions on pages below

Remember my hand over the cannon bone on the last point? It is even MORE important here.

While this is a safety precaution that should be used ANY TIME you work on the lower leg it is particularly important here. Why? Because **Liv 3 is known as a "KICK POINT" because it often activates a STRONG response.** Do NOT do this point, especially for a horse in pain, without using the safety position shown in the video linked below. This point has EARNED its reputation!

Strong responses to light pressure on the point are NOT signs to skip the point. They are a sign that things need attention. The responses usually lessen over time - often quickly. If the horse reacts strongly feel free to hover OVER the point, work at a distance and simply point your finger at Liv 3 (yes, this actually works!), or even just meditate on the point. It sounds far out but it WORKS!

Learn more about [No Pressure Acupressure™](#) on page 10.

[Watch our safety video HERE](#) and be SURE to use this position when working on this point.

Finding Dynamic Balance (Liv 3)

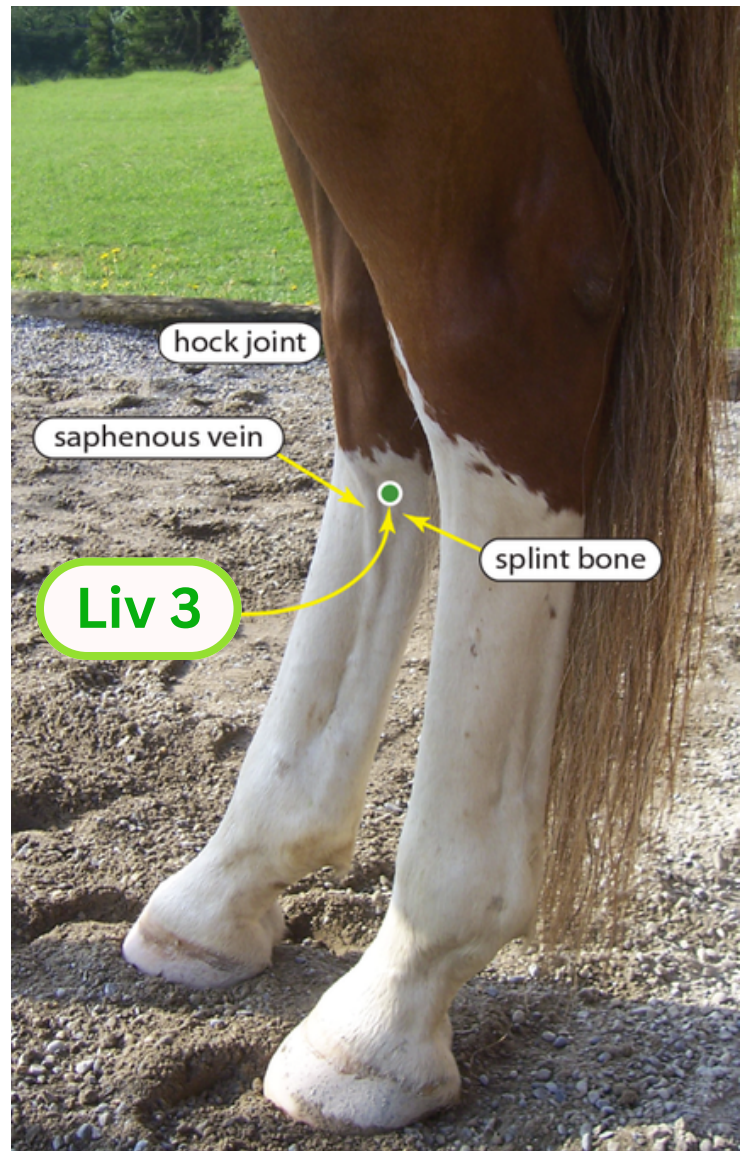
CAUTION: Do not use during pregnancy. OK to use post-pregnancy.

This point lies in essentially the same spot as the previous point, LI 4, but on the hind leg. It sits on the inside of the hind leg, immediately below the hock joint. It lies IN FRONT of the inside splint bone and ON the cannon bone. Note that on the hind leg, the splint bone lies farther back so the point will be more in the middle of the inside surface this time. On most horses it will also lie behind the soft bulging vein, the saphenous vein, that crosses here. The vein, the splint bone, and the hock joint create a small thumb-sized triangle - the point lies inside that triangle.

[See General Acupressure Video Here](#)

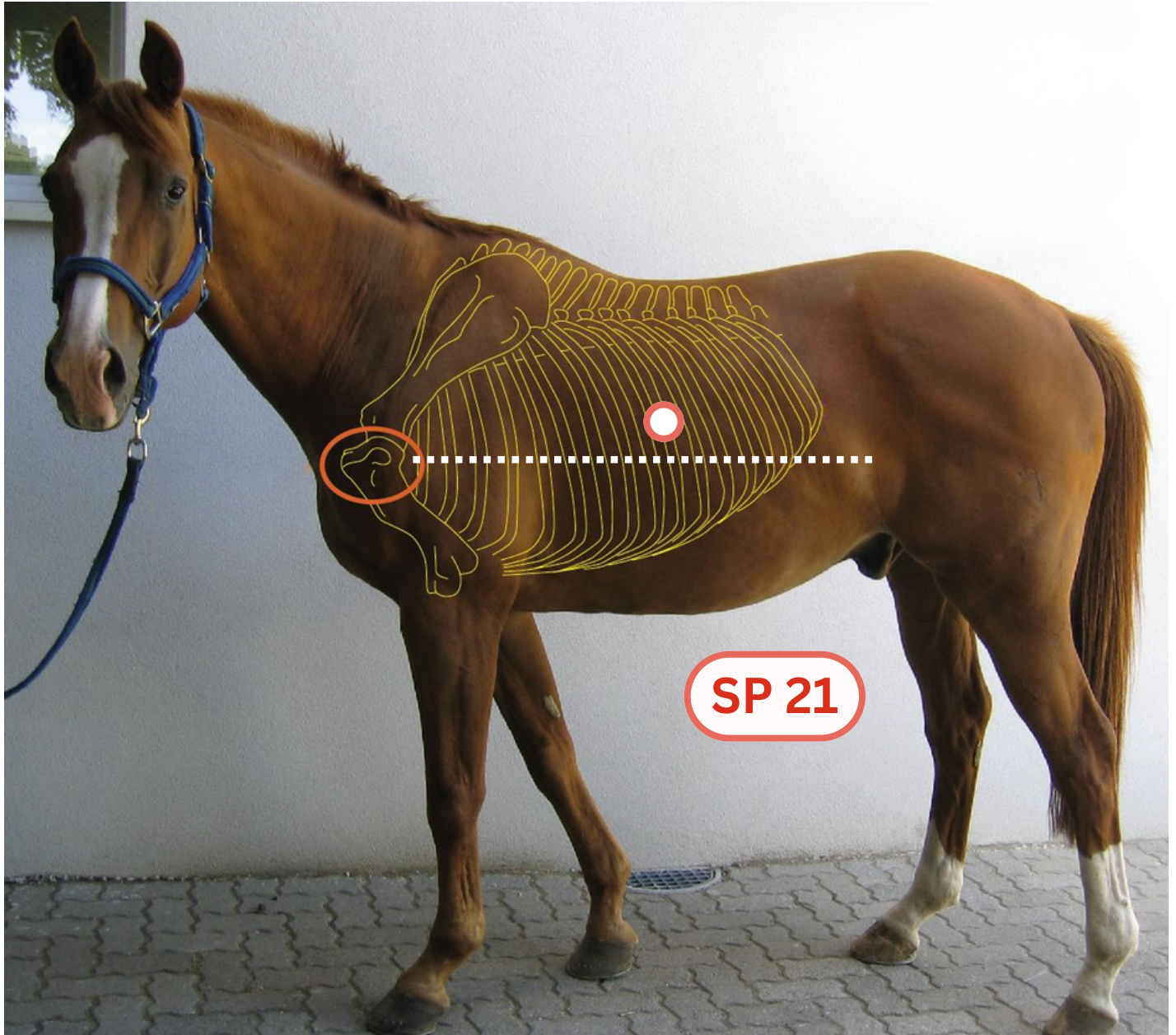
[Watch our safety video HERE](#) and be SURE to use this position when working on this Kick Point!

Strong responses to light pressure on the point are NOT signs to skip the point. They are a sign that things need attention. See more info on [No Pressure Acupressure™](#) page 10.



About Soothing Flow (SP 21)

A great point for relieving pain and stress throughout the body.

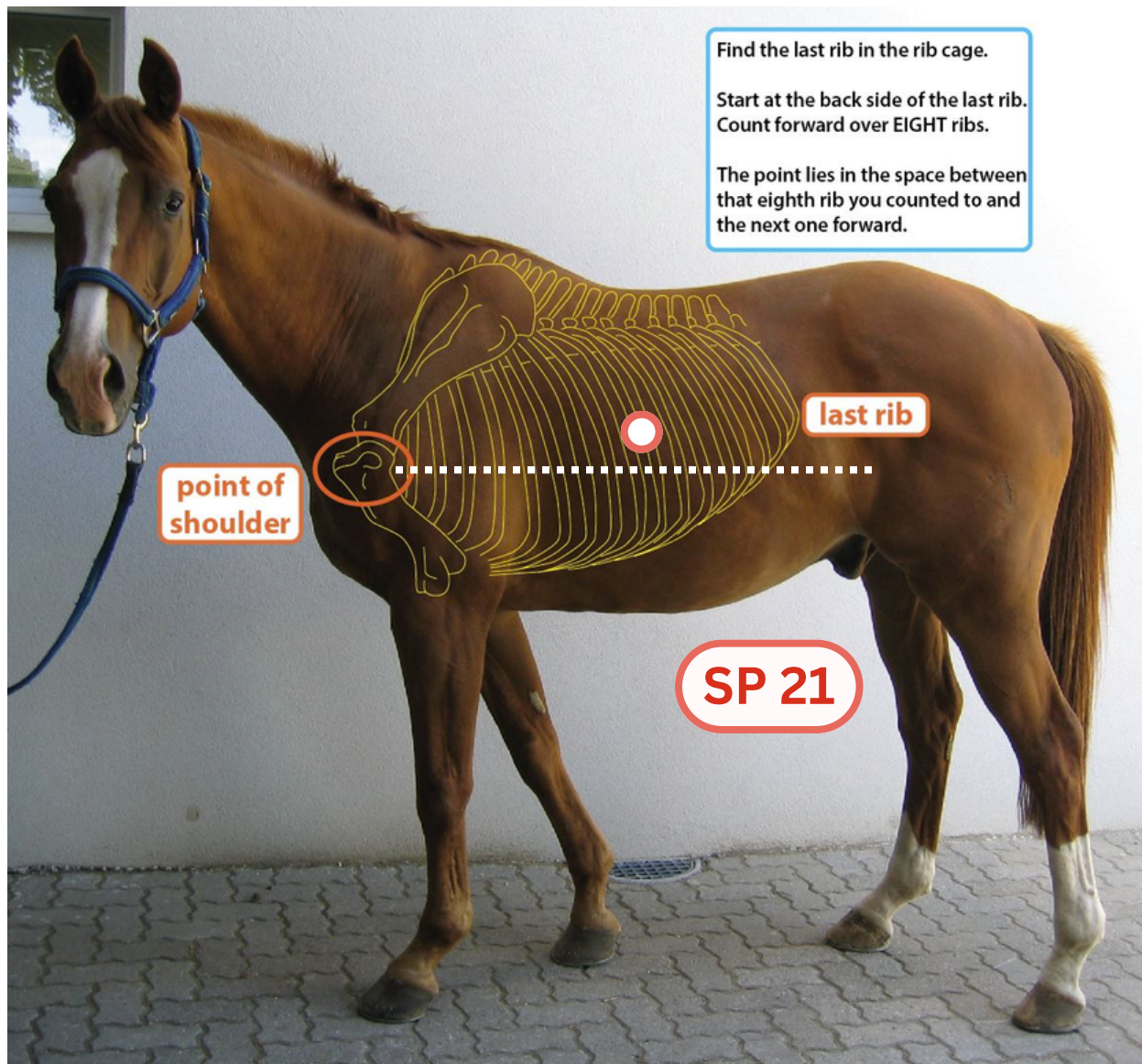


Soothing Flow (SP 21) is known to be a powerful point for relieving body-wide systemic pain. A laminitic horse certainly has pain in the hooves but also tends to be tense and achy throughout the body. This point has a strong effect for relieving body pain and for regulating blood and circulation.

It is also supportive for all organ function throughout the body. Since we know that laminitis is in truth a systemic condition that is metabolically driven (not just a hoof condition) we can use this point for harmonizing organ function and metabolism throughout especially in the Earth Element (see Video 2.)

Complete SP 21 instructions on pages below

Finding Soothing Flow (SP 21)



To find the point sweep over the horse's side. The point lies **above the point of shoulder** in the space **between the 10th and 11th ribs** (out of 18 ribs total). So if you find the last rib and gently cross over the torso counting 8 ribs you'll find the proper rib space. There is often a dip in the tissue here.

Understand that this point VARIES in location between individuals. Feel free to experiment to see if the horse responds better to a slightly different location nearby. Feel for a dip on the side and give that priority over the exact location described. This point is large - even 3 inches or 8 cm wide. So you use your fingertips or simply place your palm on the point and hold your hand on the point.

Use the point regularly for **30-180 sec** per side for horses who aren't pregnant. If accepted by the horse **use daily if possible. 2-3x daily in short sessions is OK too if tolerated.**

[See Video Here](#) for general acupressure instructions.



What's Next?

Did you find this helpful? Want to go deeper?

Be on the lookout for our upcoming free live event: [The In Your Element Experience](#)

When we go live that week we'll go over how the **Five Element Framework** can transform all aspects of your work with and for animals and clients.

We'll talk you through how to use the Elemental Matrix Method™ to

- design a CUSTOMIZED acupressure protocol to help animals in your care
- create a CUSTOMIZED training approach to each animal for stress free learning that adapts to each client easily
- arrange CUSTOMIZED animal care programs so each animal gets EXACTLY what they need to succeed
- communicate more effectively to your CLIENTS
- improve how your clients relate and work with their animals

We'll also show you how to use YOUR Five Element Matrix to **set up your business for optimal joy, ease, and profitability** because you'll be building on a foundation that is based on YOU – not some Tik Tok business guru.

We can't WAIT to share this fun event with you! Get on the wait list [HERE](#) so you don't miss a thing.

Want to learn more about the 5E Framework for your own life and your animal related business NOW while you're waiting for that event to go live?

[We have a quiz](#) that will help you determine YOUR 5E Matrix so you can build a business and a lifestyle that matches YOU - not some business guru that is nothing like you!

This quiz will be followed up with a detailed PDF result just like this one – but for YOU this time! So if you want to read up on all of YOUR Five Element goodness, head there for more info, insight, and inspiration.



TESTIMONIALS

About studying in the Elemental Acupressure Certification Program

Elemental Acupressure had such a transformation on my own horse. That's when I knew I needed to know more. As soon as I started the Elemental Acupressure Certification Program and training with Susan in more depth. Yeah, what can I say? The support from both Susan and the Elemental Acupressure community has just been immense.

I've always been somebody that's really struggled with self-belief. And Susan and the Elemental Acupressure team – they've just given me that self-belief to take me forwards. So I think it's not just the training in the Elemental Acupressure that's been transformational, it's been the support I've had as well.

I've had massive transformation in my life, my career, my relationships, and certainly my relationship with my horse. It's just given me an understanding of horses and also the people and clients. Quite often, I think I'm helping the people as much as the horse when I go and see a client. [The Five Element Approach] just gives me a different way of explaining things to them, and it gives them an understanding of maybe why a horse is behaving the way it is, and maybe why there's some conflict between the two. It is transformational on all levels.

Sue Stopforth (UK)

Elemental Acupressure Certified Animal Acupressure Practitioner



It just seems like any time I open up social media another acupressure program or some bodywork modality is being offered. There are a lot of opportunities to take classes now. There might be a cheaper program, a shorter program and yet, they're missing out on so much.

I think that Susan, in and of herself, just being able to learn from her is an opportunity I would not want anyone to pass up. But then on top of that, to learn her wisdom... Not just in Chinese medicine, but in energetics, and, the Five Elements, and intuition...

What somebody gets from going through the Elemental Acupressure program is invaluable. You can't put... a dollar amount on that. And so I hope that someone who truly wants to invest. In their future would consider investing in the Elemental Acupressure program over - hands down - any other program.

Sam MacLean (USA)

Elemental Acupressure Certified Animal Acupressure Practitioner