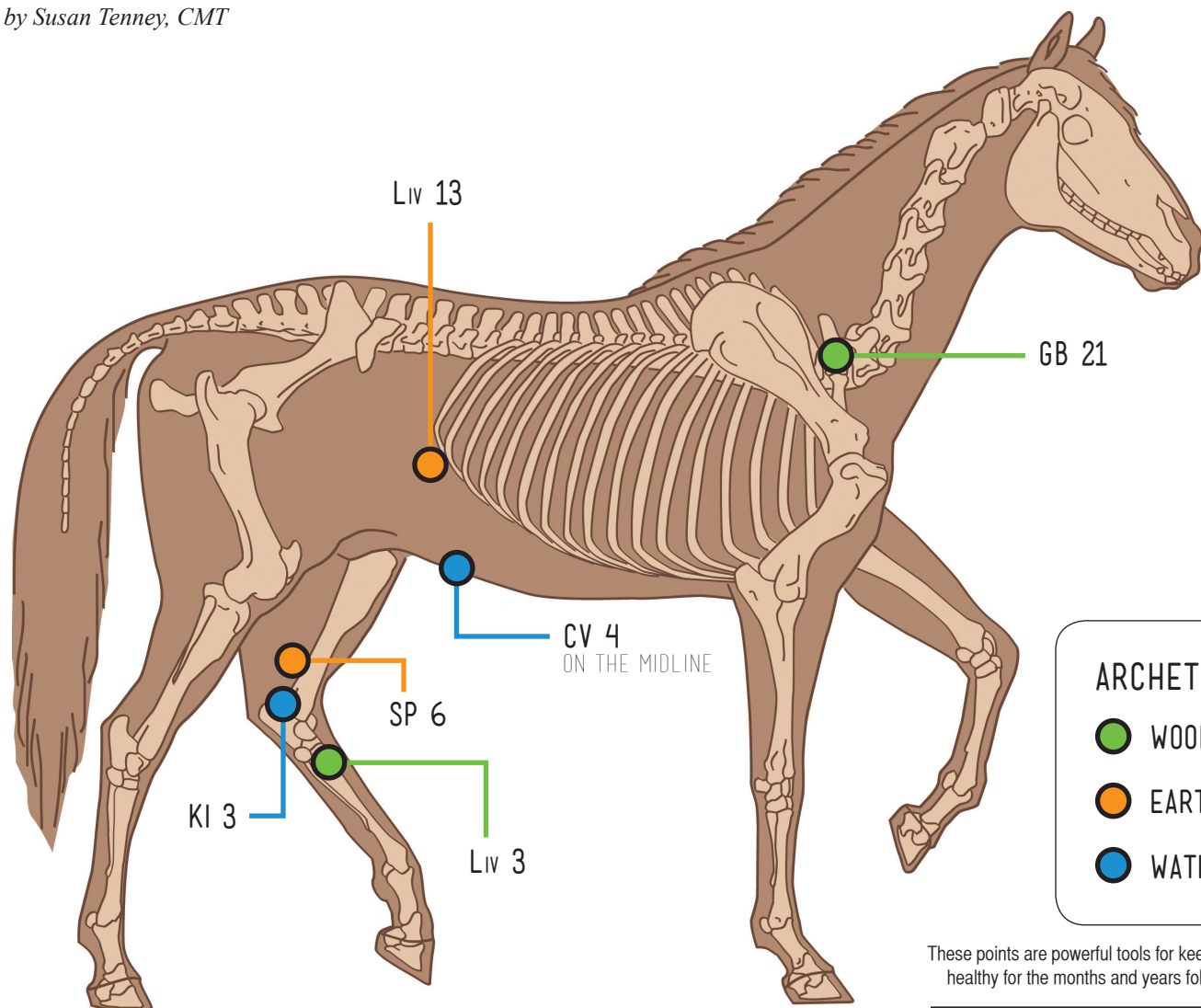




HEALING THOSE

by Susan Tenney, CMT



These points are powerful tools for keeping your horse healthy for the months and years following laminitis.

IT'S BEEN WEEKS SINCE THAT AWFUL MORNING WHEN YOU DISCOVERED YOUR HORSE STANDING IN THE PASTURE WITH OUTSTRETCHED LEGS – THAT MORNING WHEN YOU REALIZED SHE HAD LAMINITIS. FINALLY, AFTER SEVERAL VISITS WITH YOUR VET SHE'S NO LONGER HOBBLING AROUND. PHEW! SHE'S OUT OF THE "RED ZONE." NOW IT'S TIME TO START PLANNING FOR HER LONG-TERM CARE.

Though the pain has lessened and her hooves are recovering, your horse's metabolic issues haven't gone away. Regardless of what triggered her episode of *acute* laminitis, the underlying cause stems from a *chronic* imbalance. Keep in mind that although your horse has recovered and may be symptom free for years, her vulnerability to metabolic dysfunction is here to stay. From now on you'll have to manage her metabolism with care or you'll end up in the same place you were a few weeks ago. How's that for motivation?

Photos: All photos courtesy of Elemental Acupuncture
Diagram courtesy of Jeane Alice Peter (artist) and Elemental Acupuncture.

HOOVES:

ACUPRESSURE FOR CHRONIC LAMINITIS

To begin planning for your horse's longtime care, we'll take a look at three common laminitis patterns identified by Chinese medicine. Each of these easy-to-identify patterns, or archetypes, has its own symptom profile and pathway to healing. Once you've identified the archetype that best matches your horse, use the associated acupressure points to avoid future flare-ups.

THE WOOD ELEMENT ARCHETYPE:

Wood Element laminitis often occurs in spring. In spring the sap begins to rise, horses feel feisty, and the Wood Element is on the move. Horses with this archetype get laminitis when the surge of spring energy becomes blocked, a state Chinese medicine calls "Stagnation."

This type of laminitis occurs most frequently in horses with a history of chronic physical, performance, or competitive stress. Pile on a heavy vaccination schedule, frequent use of pain killers, and steroidal drugs and you have a perfect recipe for Wood Element laminitis. Horses who have experienced emotional or physical trauma may also be vulnerable to this type of laminitis.

Stimulate the points below to release blockages and eliminate stagnation. With regular acupressure

her energy will flow more easily throughout her body and nourish her metabolism at a deep core level. Use these points at least once a week during the entire year. As winter transitions into spring, a horse with the Wood Element Archetype is at her most vulnerable. Toward the end of winter make sure to stimulate these points 3-5 times per week. That way when spring arrives she'll be ready to really move out!

POINTS:

Liv 3 lies on the inside of the hind leg. It sits on the cannon bone in a triangle formed by



Above: Liv 3 is a kick point so position yourself safely while working. Place your spare hand over the cannon bone while the primary hand stimulates the point.

5 ARTICLES ON THE ELEMENTS

Want to dive a bit deeper into Five Element theory for horses? These NHM articles cover the Five Elements in more detail.

Vol. 15 Issue 1:
Getting to Know You
The "It's Elementary" series:
Volume 8 Issues 5 & 6 and
Volume 9 Issues 1 & 2

You can also visit
www.ElementalAcupressure.com
for more Five Element
information.

Elemental Acupressure



Acupressure books and charts for horses and dogs

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HOW TO DO BASIC ACUPRESSURE FOR YOUR HORSE

Note: Most of these points should NOT be used with a pregnant mare! Do not use these points during pregnancy without consulting a veterinary acupuncturist.

1 When working on the lower leg, place your spare hand over the cannon bone for safety. This is particularly important with sensitive points like Liv 3 and SP 6.

2 To prepare the horse for your touch, always stroke the area of the point first.

3 Press into the point slowly and gently with your fingertips, allowing the horse to tell you if there is any pain or discomfort.

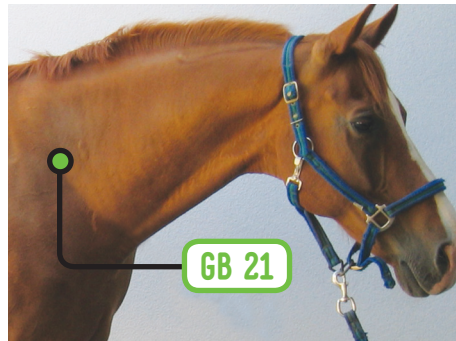
4 Rest at the point for 30 to 60 seconds.

5 Stroke over the area when you are done and repeat on the other side.

6 If the horse shows a strong negative reaction, discontinue and try again at another time.

the splint bone, the hock joint and the bulging saphenous vein that crosses this area. Note that this point often elicits a swift, strong reaction like kicking out. Be sure to position yourself safely. Most horses who respond strongly relax deeply afterwards, especially after a few sessions.

GB 21 lies directly in front of the shoulder blade, halfway from the mane to the bottom of the neck. Feel for a long hard cord of muscle, like a steel cable, lying in front of the shoulder blade. The point lies directly on top of this “cable.”



Above: GB 21 relieves pain and keeps your horse's energy moving smoothly.

THE EARTH ELEMENT ARCHETYPE:

Earth Element laminitis often occurs during Indian summer. Horses with this archetype usually have a history of weight issues, diarrhea, abdominal bloat, cresty necks, and fluid-filled joints. Their overall energy is sludgy. These conditions describe an underlying metabolic weakness referred to in Chinese medicine as “Dampness.” Dampness is very common in “easy keepers” who gain weight at the drop of a hat and are often diagnosed as being insulin resistant. They may also have a sweet tooth and a low tolerance for hard work.

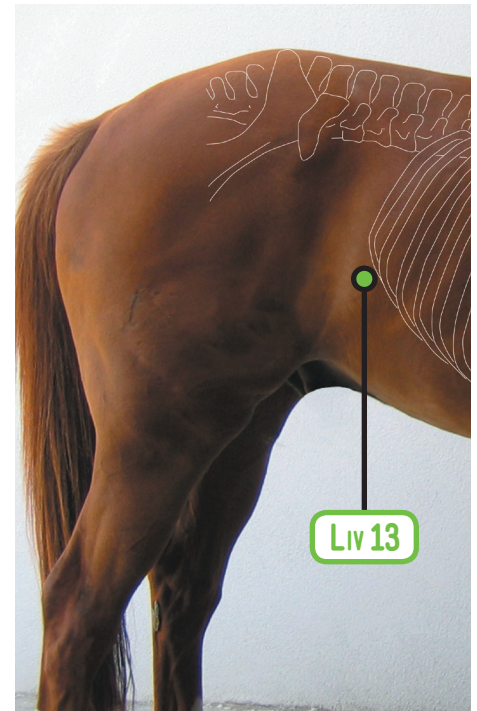
Use the points below to dispel Dampness. Stimulate these points at least once a week during the entire year. As summer transitions into fall a horse with the Earth Element Archetype is at her most vulnerable. At the end of summer make sure to stimulate these points 3-5 times per week. That way your horse will ease into Indian summer feeling vital and ready for action.

POINTS:

SPLEEN 6 lies on the inside surface of the gaskin, 6 finger widths above the hock joint on the back edge of the tibia bone, which runs through the gaskin. If you are not sure exactly where it lies, stroke gently along the back side

of the tibia and rest your fingers where it feels right – often where there is a large dip or where the horse responds strongly. Take care with this one – many horses will be ultra-sensitive here!

Liv 13 lies on the side of your horse's abdomen just below the back corner of the rib cage.



Above: Liv 13 point can be sensitive. Touch gently and respectfully.

THE WATER ELEMENT ARCHETYPE:

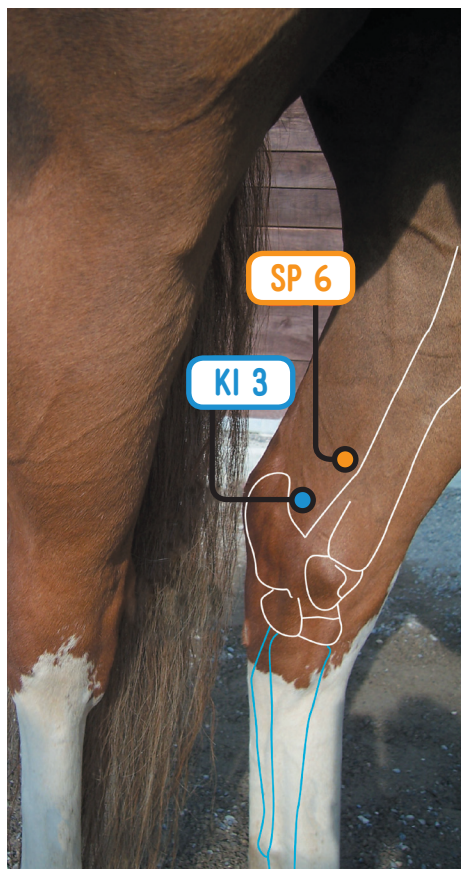
Water Element laminitis most often occurs during the cold of winter. This type of chronic laminitis is more likely to occur in older horses. These horses may exhibit diarrhea, low vitality, frequent urination, sore back muscles, low fertility, or the signs of Cushing's syndrome (long hair and stocking up). Chinese medicine refers to this archetype's lack of vitality as a “Cold” condition.

Use the points below at least once a week during the entire year. These points dispel Cold by warming and strengthening the metabolism. As autumn transitions into winter your Water Element Archetype horse will be at her most vulnerable. At the end of fall begin to stimulate these points 3-5 times per week so that your horse flows into winter with a sparkle in her eye.

POINTS:

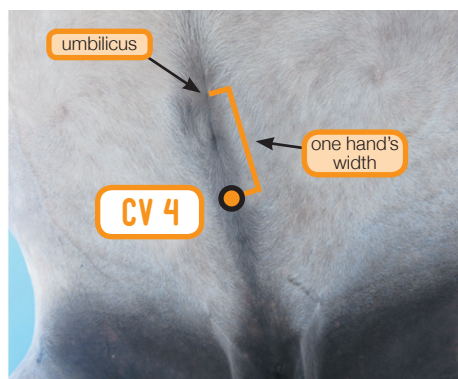
KI 3 lies on the inside surface of the hock in the groove in front of the point of hock. To find it, place the palm of your hand over the point

of hock and curl your fingertips to the inside. Rest your fingertips in the groove in front of the point of hock.



SP6 KI3 These two points help nourish the metabolism deeply.

CV 4 lies on the midline of the belly, one hand's width behind the umbilicus. Don't use fingertip pressure here. Because many horses are sensitive at this point, use a cupped hand over the point instead of finger pressure. ☺



CV4 This well-hidden point yields a huge benefit for the metabolism.



About the author:
Susan Tenney, CMT works internationally as a practitioner of Five Element acupressure for animals. She teaches classes for animal

lovers of all ages and offers an online certification program through her company, Elemental Acupressure. Learn more about her courses, books and acupressure charts at www.ElementalAcupressure.com and www.facebook.com/elemental.acu

FURTHER RESOURCES

I am grateful to Dr. Joyce Harman for her insight, expertise and generosity of spirit in the field of holistic equine care. Refer to these articles with Dr. Harman for more laminitis information.

Volume 5 Issue 5 of *Natural Horse Magazine*: "Dr. Harman Speaks on Equine Metabolic Syndrome (Cushings) and Laminitis"

www.equisearch.com/horses_care/health/alternative_therapies/easternlaminitis_112206/



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