

Conditions that respond well to acupuncture

Back Pain

e.g. spondylitis/spondylosis & disc disease

Spondylosis - A degenerative condition of the spine that may lead to ankylosis (joint restriction due to adhesions/bone union)

Spondylitis - Inflammation of a vertebra, due to trauma or infection.

Arthritis

e.g. hips, stifles, hocks, elbows, shoulders

Inflammation of a joint.

Hip Dysplasia

An abnormal condition of the acetabulum and femoral head (hip joint).

Muscle & Ligament sprains/strains and spasms

Strain - Overstretching of muscle fibres, ligaments or tendons.

Sprain - Inflammation of a tendon, ligament or muscle due to excessive stretching of its fibres.

Lick granulomas and other chronic skin conditions

Lick granulomas - A skin mass of granulation tissue which forms as a result of incessant licking of a wound, ulcer, or even unbroken skin-in which there may be a local neuritis causing itching of the spot, and resultant licking.



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Acupuncture

What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is the use of very fine, pre-sterilised, needles injected through the skin of an animal to produce a response. The needles can be left in from a few seconds to around 20 minutes.

Most cats and dogs will tolerate acupuncture very well. However, there will always be those pets who hate needles of any kind and may need reassurance, especially at the first session

It may take 4 – 6 sessions for pets to respond to acupuncture, so we would recommend at least 4 treatments. Initially these will be at weekly intervals, following this it may be possible to gradually increase the time periods between sessions. The frequency of treatments depends on the individual animals needs, but regular top-ups will be required to maintain the therapeutic effect.

How does it work?

Acupuncture works in a number of ways. When the needle is inserted into an area of muscle that is taut, or that is supplied by the same nerves that supply a nearby painful joint, a nerve impulse is stimulated. This leads to three main effects:-

- Firstly, it causes the release of local healing factors at the site of stimulation.
- Secondly, it stimulates the release of pain relieving chemicals in the brain and spinal cord (endorphins, serotonin, noradrenalin etc) which produces more generalised pain relief.
- Finally, the activation of the nerves in the area by the needle causes a negative feedback 'turning off' the pain in the area. This is similar to the system that prevents us from hurting ourselves twice on the same stimulus. For example, if you touch something hot you have an initial sharp pain which then disappears very quickly (it is "turned off") so that if you touch it again you still feel the burn.



Sarah and Casper

Sarah McIntosh BVet Med MRCVS

In the UK, the law states that only vets trained in acupuncture can treat animals with needles. Human-trained acupuncturists can treat people, but not animals. This is because it is important to have a correct diagnosis before treatment.

Garston vet **Sarah McIntosh** is based at our Warminster surgery and is qualified to perform acupuncture. If you feel that this may help your cat or dog, please **contact us on 01985 213350** to book an appointment or if you would like to find out more.



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