

The Yin-Yang of a Healthy Foal

by Amy Snow and Nancy Zidonis



Foals are amazing creatures; they dance in the field with other foals while not allowing their mothers' to stray too far. They prance behind their mares eager to keep up no matter where she goes. One look at a foal's sweet young face makes your heart melt and forgive him any of his antics.

Young horses are supposed to be full of life; they must race and chase around the field. Their bones, muscles, and neurological connections are growing by the minute. They also need rest and sleep as well as nourishment. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the high energy and impetus behind the exponential growth of a foal are considered Yang. The rest, nutrients and essence used to make that growth possible is considered Yin.

The essential concept underlying TCM is that health is based on a dynamic balance between Yin and Yang. You might ask how a foal could be healthy if he's bounding from one extreme to the other? The answer is foals are supposed to be out of balance at different times because they are in such a high growth period. There are times they just have to be very Yang, and then they balance it by being very Yin. Their growing bodies have their own form of balance and that's the way it needs to be.

You can do an acupressure session called "Gentle Pinches" that will support and enhance whatever is going on in your foal's body at the time. Give it a try at a time when the young horse has played and exercised enough and is ready to be calm. Acupressure has a way of creating a very special bond between you and the foal which, in turn, can prepare him for healthy human contact as well as healthy development.

Gentle Pinches: Acupressure for Foals

1. Pick a time when the foal is relatively calm and find a location

where the mare can be near and there are few distractions. Take three long breaths in and out, then focus for a minute or two on your adoration of this young animal and how you want to contribute to his healthy growth.

2. Stand to one side of the foal. Starting just behind his shoulder blades on each side of the spine, use your thumb and index fingers on both hands to very gently pinch his skin. Then move your hand approximately one inch (one to two inches on a larger young horse) in the direction of his tail and repeat the gentle pinching. Continue to move your hands down one inch at a time, softly pinching the skin as you go, until you reach the base of his tail.
3. Start again, just below the foal's scapula and repeat the gentle pinches on each side of his spine and down to his tail two more times.
4. When you have completed three cycles of gentle pinches, go back to behind his scapula, with the heel of your hand sweep down the foal's back with one hand on each side of his spine, similar to how you would brush out the wrinkles on your bed cover to make it tidy and smooth. Repeat this sweeping motion three times.
5. Now hug your foal and tell him how lovely he is and much you love him.

Amy Snow and Nancy Zidonis are the authors of: *Equine Acupressure: A Working Manual*. They own Tallgrass Publishers, which offers Acupressure Books, DVDs, Meridian Charts for horses, dogs, and cats. They founded Tallgrass Animal Acupressure Institute which provides hands-on and online training courses worldwide including a Practitioner Certification Program. To contact them: phone: 888-841-7211; web: www.animalacupressure.com; email: info@animalacupressure.com.



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