

Happy trails



Using acupressure to relieve motion sickness

by Amy Snow and Nancy Zidonis

AS CATHERINE TOOK A SWEEPING TURN ONTO THE INTERSTATE, she was thankful she had brought a travel crate for Hugo, her nine-week-old Saint Bernard puppy. She was taking Hugo home for the first time and his tummy was not happy with the ride – up came his breakfast.

Those who have experienced a carsick dog might choose other words for the condition, but in Traditional Chinese Medicine, regurgitation is considered “rebellious stomach chi.” Stomach chi is the life force energy that supports the stomach’s ability to function properly. It is supposed to flow down, not up. If the chi goes in the wrong direction, it is being “rebellious” and that’s no fun for dog or driver.

Acupressure can be used to help avoid rebellious stomach chi. By applying pressure to certain points on your dog’s body, you help him balance the flow of energy through his body so his stomach chi will flow in its natural direction – down.

Acupressure is perfectly safe, so you can perform a treatment whenever you suspect that traveling with your dog might be a bit bumpy. It will make for happier trails for both you and your friend.

A simple acupressure treatment for motion sickness

We suggest you perform the motion sickness/nausea treatment within an hour before getting in the car (see diagram). This treatment can also be used on other occasions when nausea or stomach upsets are causing your dog discomfort.

An acupressure treatment is a comforting and healing experience for you and your animal. Start by finding a quiet, calm location where your dog feels at ease. Breathe evenly and slowly while thinking about how you want your dog to feel. Once you have formulated your intention for the treatment, you are ready to begin.

Opening

This prepares your dog for intentional touch. Gently place one hand on your dog’s shoulder: this is your “anchor” hand. Place the heel of your other hand at the top of his neck just to the side of his spine and stroke down his

neck. Continue by smoothly stroking over his body down to his hindquarters, staying to the side of his spine. Continue to stroke down his leg following the bladder meridian line (see diagram) to the outside digit. Repeat this procedure three times on each side of your dog.

Point work

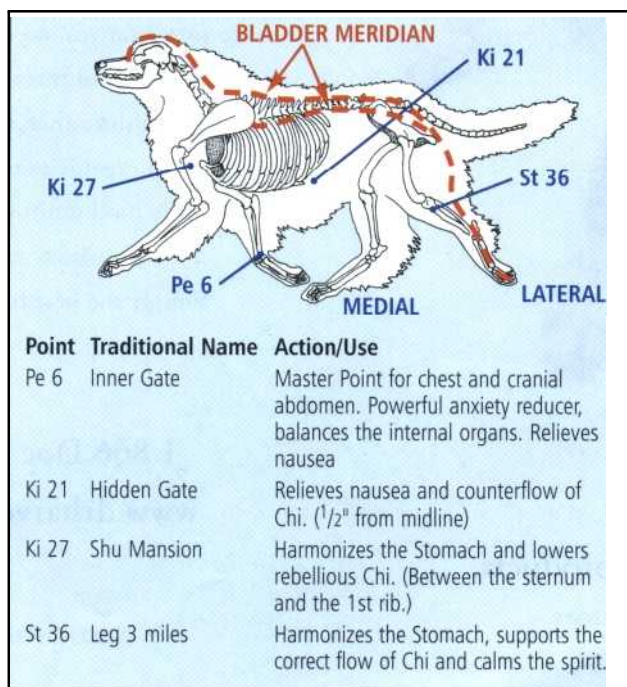
For the point work phase of the treatment, follow the Motion Sickness/Nausea chart. Start by resting one hand comfortably on your animal. Use your other hand to perform the actual point work. Hold a specific acupressure point for 30 seconds to one minute. There are two techniques you can use:

- Direct thumb technique: Gently place the tip of your thumb directly on the acupressure point at a 90° angle, adding a little pressure.
- Two-finger technique: Put your middle finger on top of your index finger and then place your index finger at a 90° angle, gently but with intentional firmness, directly on the acupressure point.

Use whichever technique is most comfortable for you and your dog. The two-finger technique seems to be particularly good for smaller dogs and the thumb technique for larger dogs.

Closing

To complete the session, repeat the stroking procedure described in the Opening phase of the treatment. With the heel of your hand, stroke down your animal’s body along the bladder meridian, starting at the top of the neck, just off the midline. Repeat three times on each side of his body. This reconnects the flow of energy and establishes the new cellular memory.



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