

Back Pain Management

Back pain for horses can be difficult to treat, requiring a combination of treatments to stop the cycle of pain and get your horse back to feeling pain free. We can help you determine which treatments are best for your horse!

Shockwave

- Uses high-energy sound waves to stimulate cells, releasing healing growth factors that reduce inflammation, increase blood flow, and help bones and soft tissues heal.
- Typically, you can see results within 1-3 treatments.

Chiropractic

- Helps increase mobility in vertebrae and helps relieve tension or stiffness.
- Dr. Hood is both a veterinarian and Certified Veterinary Medical Manipulation Practitioner. The great thing about having a vet perform your chiropractic work is that they are qualified to treat the WHOLE horse and include other therapies.

Acupuncture

- Helps with stiffness and back pain by stimulating nerves, muscles, and connective tissue.
- Electro-acupuncture uses an electrical current to facilitate blood flow, increase lymph drainage, and regulate communication with nerves.

Mesotherapy

- This method of treatment is done by injecting anti-inflammatories and pain control into the middle layer of skin.
- Works by breaking the pain cycle and gives other therapies time to work.

Injections

- Targeted injections can be performed at problem areas that are found on radiographs or ultrasound.
- Anti-inflammatory medication can be injected around areas of kissing spine or arthritis.

Systemic Medications

- Methocarbamol (muscle relaxer), Gabapentin (pain relief), Prednisolone (pain relief); in general NSAIDs are usually not as effective at relieving spinal pain as the above listed medications
- These medications can help break the cycle of pain and tension while rehab and other treatments have time to work.
- Help the horse be more comfortable being ridden so that they can effectively do their rehab work.

Osphos

- This is an IM injection that helps with bone pain and remodeling, may help treat kissing spine.
- Baseline bloodwork is recommended prior and stopping NSAIDs (Bute/Banamine/Equioxx).

Further Diagnostics

- X-rays and ultrasound of the back can identify underlying conditions such as kissing spine.
- Correct saddle fit is essential because a poor fitting saddle will cause back pain and prevent resolution regardless of treatments used.
- Back pain can look similar to pain from gastric ulcers, which can be diagnosed with gastroscopy.
- Lameness in any leg can also cause back pain from compensation, so a soundless evaluation is recommended.

Physical therapy is the most important part of treatment, see back for recommendations.

Physical Therapy and Core Strengthening Exercises

Spinal mobilization and core strengthening exercises: perform the following routine 5 times per week.

- Baited carrot stretches:
 - Chin to right girth 1x
 - Chin to chest 1x
 - Chin to left girth 1x
 - Chin to right flank 1x
 - Chin between knees 1x
 - Chin to left flank 1x
 - Chin to right hind fetlock 1x
 - Chin between front fetlocks 1x
 - Chin to left hind fetlock 1x
- Belly lifts:
 - 3x near sternum to lift behind withers
 - 3x further back (mid belly) to lift thoracic vertebrae in the saddle area and lower back.
- Hind end tucks/ Pelvic tilts: 3x to round low back and tuck pelvis
- Back wiggles: Both sides for 20-30 seconds per side
- Tail pull: 1x for ~30-60 seconds
- Equiband or similar system is also helpful for core strengthening
- Backing up hills
- Ground poles and Cavaletti
- Physiotherapy Balance Pads (Sure Foot Equine, Theraband Stability Trainer Pad): stand on pads 5 mins per day
- Other: _____

Scan the QR code for instructions

Hind End Tucks



Belly Lifts



Carrot Stretches



Tail Pull



Back Wiggles

