

A woman in a dark jacket and light blue pants is kneeling in a stable, applying a blue PEMF therapy device to the lower leg of a brown horse. The device has 'iMRS' and 'JANARO' printed on it. The horse's leg is also wrapped in a blue bandage. The background shows a wooden stable interior.

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF REHABILITATING YOUR INJURED HORSE

Photo courtesy of Devon Lippano

Using PEMF therapy to treat a front limb injury.

By Debra Pearse, RMT-RP, CCMP, CESMT

Injuries happen, and getting your horse back into work as soon as possible depends on implementing and carrying through with a good rehabilitation program.

Whether you're the new owner of a rescue horse, an experienced horse caretaker, or anything in between, facing the challenges of rehabilitating an injured equine can seem daunting. It can be a long process, which requires a serious commitment of both time and financial resources. Attention to detail and having a clear vision of your "do's and don'ts" can improve your horse's chance for a successful recovery.

DO'S

DO BUILD A LIST OF TRUSTED PROFESSIONALS

It's always important to foster a strong relationship with your veterinarian. When dealing with an equine injury requiring ongoing rehabilitation, be sure to keep the lines of communication open. Ask questions about:

- Diagnosis
- Treatment options

- Response time to phone calls and appointment availability
- The cost of follow-up visits, medications and procedures
- Estimated timelines for recovery

Most veterinarians will happily discuss your horse's prognosis and treatment plan. Having a definitive plan will help with your own peace of mind, and your ability to stay focused on a positive outcome.

For the best outcome, be open to integrative healthcare. Resources such as nutraceuticals, supplementation and holistic therapies will support your horse on her healing journey. Massage, chiropractic, acupuncture or acupressure, photonic or laser therapy, craniosacral therapy, Reiki, T-Touch, shockwave therapy and PEMF (Pulsed Electro Magnetic Field) therapy can all prove extremely beneficial to your horse's recovery. Your farrier or barefoot trimmer is also an important part of your horse's healthcare team and should be kept informed of her injury and recovery plan.

DO CREATE A HEALING SPACE

While your horse convalesces, provide an environment that's conducive to healing.

If your horse is confined to stall rest, try to relocate him to a quiet dust-free stall that offers safe footing. Ensure your horse is comfortable by providing extra cushioning with deep non-slip bedding. Be vigilant with stall cleanliness to prevent infection and the build-up of bacteria from dirty bedding. If possible, avoid straw bedding to eliminate the likelihood of mold, mildew and allergens that could be detrimental to your horse's respiratory health.

Once your horse receives the "all-clear" for limited movement, consider moving her to a small paddock. Ensure the area is quiet, clean and secure. It should allow for easy visibility, so you can monitor your horse's activity. She will need access to fresh hay, water and shelter from the weather. Consider the footing not only in the paddock, but also on the way to the paddock. The footing should be soft but firm, and as dry as possible. Turning an injured horse out in mud or slippery conditions should be avoided at all costs, as she could end up further injuring herself and delaying the healing process.

DO MONITOR YOUR HORSE'S PROGRESS

It's essential to stay up-to-date with where your horse is at on her healing journey, and when she can safely return to her regular activities. Follow-up appointments with your veterinarian will likely include diagnostic monitoring, based on the type of injury sustained. In between appointments, consider regular use of video recording to help track your horse's progress on the road to recovery.

Most of us have smartphones with a built-in camera, so it's simple to do and invaluable for recordkeeping. Your veterinarian or other healthcare providers cannot see your horse in person every day, but by watching the videos, they can share in her important milestones.

Continued on page 28.

IMAGING TECHNIQUES

Radiographs (x-rays) are recommended if a horse's injury is related to bony structures. For soft tissue injuries such as damage to ligaments and tendons, ultrasound is commonly used. Thermographic monitoring is similar to ultrasound, but as an added bonus, it can identify lesions to soft tissue two weeks earlier than traditional ultrasound can. More advanced diagnostic imaging tools include MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging), CT scans (Computed Tomography) and bone scans (Nuclear Scintigraphy).



Tired of buying saddles that don't fit you or your horse?
Not with a Custom Fit Synergist Saddle!



- ~ Custom fit to horse and rider
- ~ We have options not models
- ~ Best Guarantee in the Business
- ~ Endurance, Trail or Western

"Using the Equimeasure Kit is what convinced me that the Synergist Saddle would be the right choice! I have bought many saddles through the years and your company hit the nail on the head: Excellent customer service, workmanship and saddle fit for horse and rider!"

~ Carolyn L ~



Call CJ today to learn more about the EQUImeasure Saddle Fit System and get your **FREE** Saddle Fit DVD.



877-595-0115 US ~ 307-433-1008 Intl ~ synergistsaddles.com/synergist-dvd/

Saddle Fit Meets the 21st Century. Synergist Saddles ~ The Fit First Custom Saddle Makers



No More Wasted Hay!

Sizes to fit both square & round bales
1", 1.25" and 2" Netting Holes

We will save you a **BALE** of money!



2255 Hwy 20, Unit 6
Welland, Ontario L3B 5N5

Save \$20.00 off Large Round Bale!
Use coupon code: Bale Saver

(877) 617-8787 www.slowfeednetting.com

Also available now at Slow Feed Netting!

Trailer Bag

Holds 3-4 flakes
measures 2' x 3'

Comes in: Mesh sizes of 1" 1 1/4", 1 1/2", 1.5" as well as a 2" mesh opening.

List Price \$44.00



HEALTHY HEMP  PET COMPANY
est. 2014



Heard the HYPE about HEMP products?

Horses may benefit, too!
May help with trailer anxiety, stiffness, & aches.



Vapor Distilled



Vet Formulated



Premium Ingredients



Chemical Free

HealthyHempPet.com

Continued from page 27.

DON'TS

DON'T RUSH RECOVERY

Recognize that rest is essential to recovery and that it takes time to heal. Every horse is unique and recovery times will vary based on the nature of the injury, the horse's age, her pre-injury condition, and whether or not she required surgery. If you rush your horse back into work too early, you create a significant risk of re-injury. You will have to start all over again, and this will prolong recovery time. Don't rush it. Ensure your horse has fully recovered before returning her to regular activities.

DON'T FORGET YOUR HORSE'S EMOTIONAL NEEDS

Standing in a stall for extended periods of time, separated from paddock mates, can become boring, monotonous and lonely for your horse. Provide her with enrichment activities to reduce the likelihood that she'll develop undesirable habits, such as weaving or cribbing.

Enrichment activities such as a slow feeder hay net, food puzzles, hanging balls and other food-dispensing toys such as lickable stall snacks will help keep your horse happy and occupied.

You can also teach your horse some simple tricks she can perform to earn rewards. The stretching and physical therapy exercises included in your horse's treatment protocol can also be taught as tricks. Your horse will enjoy the time she gets to spend with you, and recovery time will speed up – a win-win for both of you!

DON'T DISMISS YOUR INTUITION

If something doesn't feel right, or you get a hunch that something is "off" with your horse's recovery, don't ignore your instincts. Our intuition is often overlooked, but it is of great value and we need to pay attention. Sometimes, time is of the essence; it is much more important to err on the side of caution and make a call to your vet based on a "hunch". Things can be prevented by early intervention. Don't regret ignoring your intuition.

Many rehabilitated horses will be able to return to work and live long comfortable lives. Stay focused on a positive outcome, and honor the journey as you help your horse return to health. ●

Debra Pearce, RMT-RR, CCMP, CESMT has specialized in alternative equine therapies since 1979. She is certified in both canine and equine Massage Therapy, is a registered animal Reiki Master/teacher and one of the first registered animal Reiki practitioners in the world. Debra is also trained in Small Animal and Equine Acupuncture, CranioSacral Therapy, Myofascial and Trigger Point Release, Photonic Therapy and Medical Intuition for Animals. She is a certified animal PEMF specialist and is currently developing an international certification program for small animal and equine PEMF Therapy. Debra is located in Barrie, Ontario and can be reached through her websites AnimalPEMFTherapy.com and PawsitiveSpirit.com.