



KINGS BOUNTY

EQUINE PRACTICE

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2021

Welcoming Lili to the Kings Bounty Team!

Lili joined the practice this spring as part of the administration team. Lili's admin and equine background compliment working in the practice office very well.

Born and bred into horses, Lili has been part of the equine industry for many years, riding competitively for some of the world's best show jumpers.

With a keen interest in marketing, she spent a period studying and working within a leading agency to develop her office skills. She has since started assisting equine professionals with their marketing.

Besides riding, Lili enjoys most sports, photography and country walks, particularly with her Frenchie dog "Mollie".



Did you know our supplement range can be recycled?

The containers for our supplement range are made using HD-PE plastics, which can be recycled into many types of goods?

HD-PE can often be picked up through most curbside recycling programs.

However, check with your Local Authority to ensure it can be recycled in your area.

You could also re-use the containers for storing items such as studs and plaiting kits etc.



FEI ban trimming the whiskers of competition horses

From July this year, horses who have had their sensory hairs removed (unless for veterinary reasons) will be disqualified from FEI competitions, with other governing bodies following suit.

Why are whiskers important?

A horse's whiskers (also known as vibrissae) are sensory hairs that provide valuable information to the horse. They have their own nerve and blood supply. The long and thick hairs are tactical receptors, which act as a 'third eye', and help them gain a sense of their surroundings. The whiskers enable the horse to sense the environment in their blind spot and identify objects. Therefore, whiskers ought to be left as nature intended!

Rehabilitating your horse after an injury



This article aims to give some helpful tips on how to manage your horse when rehabilitating them from an injury and what to look out for. Each individual injury is different and may have different requirements, therefore please always discuss your rehabilitation plan with your vet at the beginning and along the way.

Exercise

Horses will often be commencing exercise following a period of box or paddock rest. A gradual and controlled return to exercise is paramount to avoid re-injury.

The activity of walking helps stimulate the maturation of repair tissue in cartilage and tendons. The type of injury and how your horse responds, dictates the length of time spent at each stage of the programme. A period of in hand walking is often initially advised, however, if your horse is not amenable to this, ridden walking can be started sooner.

Exercise usually comprises a period of walking, followed by the introduction of trot work, applied in short bursts, with eventual addition of canter work. Exercises involving lateral work, poles and eventually jumps can be added with time and tailored to suit each individual case.

During the rehabilitation period, it is crucial that you monitor your horse for any signs of lameness or signs of the old injury recurring.

Get to know your horse's limbs and how they feel before and after work – do you notice any heat, swelling, pain etc?

For soft tissue e.g. tendon or ligament injuries, your vet will often advise repeat ultrasound scan evaluations before the next increase in work is implemented to check that the old injury is still healing sufficiently and has not deteriorated from an increase in work.

Muscle loss can be common during rest and rehabilitation from injury and this will need to be built back up slowly. Small weaknesses in your horse may be more notable due to the reduction in this supporting musculature. Ensuring that your horse is working correctly and remaining relaxed will help develop the correct muscle structure to support your horse's body correctly. Exercises with poles are a very useful way of encouraging your horse to activate their core and work over their back.

Choose your surface carefully! - Be mindful of the surfaces you are riding on.

Soft tissue injuries will favour firm over soft ground. If hacking is not feasible due to safety reasons and you have to ride in a school, ensure your school is harrowed, level and not overly deep. Joint issues will prefer softer footing over continuous hard ground due to the less concussive effects.

Despite this, riding on a variety of surfaces is beneficial as it reduces the impact of repetitive loads of one surface on your horse's body, so try and mix up the surfaces you ride on once your horse is back in more work.

Turnout

Some horses may benefit from a period of paddock rest before exercise is commenced. For others, it may be better to commence walking work whilst the horse is still on box rest due to the risks of them causing themselves more injury. In hand grazing can be carried out during this time and if your horse is stable bound, find something to keep them entertained e.g. a hanging toy, slow eater hay box etc.

Due to the risks of potential re-injury when turned out, small pens are often advised e.g. 6mx6m initially. The use of oral sedation prescribed by your vet can be used, especially in the initial stages. This can also be considered for the initial walking work but must be under your vets direction due to the rider safety implications.

Consider the use of over reach boots and tendon boots to protect your horses legs and be mindful of the weather conditions/ times of year e.g. if its muddy, snowy or icy, it's probably best to wait until those conditions have cleared!

Rehabilitating your horse after an injury

Feeding

Your horse's feed should have reduced during any prolonged period of box rest due to their reduced energy requirements.

Hard feed should only be increased according to the amount of work the horse is in.

Most horse's in light work will cope fine on long fibred forage such as hay and a balancer to provide them with all the essential nutrients they need.

Being overweight will not be beneficial to rehabilitating an orthopaedic injury! Try and keep your horse's weight under control - your vet can help advise on how best to do this.

The use of supplements such as our "Veterinary Myomass-E" can help with the development and maintenance of lean muscle mass that may have been lost during your horse's time off. The supplement can be used for as long as is needed and does not test under competition rules.



Saddle Fit

Your horse will have changed shape and will change shape frequently during the rehabilitation period. We advise that your saddle is checked before any ridden work commences and then again at frequent intervals going forward.

Farriery

Keep on top of your horses feet and ensure they are well trimmed. Various soft tissue injuries in the lower limb will benefit from slightly different shoeing and it is crucial that your horses feet are kept well balanced. If not, this could contribute to re-injury. It is always best for your vet and farrier to work together to ensure the best outcome for your horse.

Your vet may advise foot balance radiographs to be taken if they have any concerns about your horse's foot balance. This allows the vet and farrier to assess the angulations of the bones within the hoof capsule and amend your horse's shoeing appropriately to try and reduce the risk of re-injury.

Physiotherapy / Chiropractic Treatments/ Osteopathy

Maintenance supportive treatments can be very beneficial to your horse during their rehabilitation period in order to help alleviate any tension that may develop as they start doing more work.

Dental Check

If your horse has been off for some time, it is worth getting their teeth checked by your vet or a BAEDT before you start working them properly to ensure that there are no issues that may be detrimental to the rehabilitation.



Strangles Blood Tests for Horses Movement



We are often asked to take blood samples from horses to test for 'Strangles' before they move to a new yard etc. The reason for this has been to test for subclinical (silent) carriers of *Streptococcus equi. equi* (Strangles), to prevent them entering new yards and potentially causing an outbreak of Strangles.

However, more recent research has shown that the blood test is NOT a reliable diagnostic test for detecting Strangles carriers. The blood test looks at ANTIBODIES to the infection i.e. it tells us if the horse has been recently or historically exposed to the bacteria and has therefore mounted an immune response.

Horses and ponies that have previously been infected with strangles can become silent carriers of Strangles due to the bacteria residing as hard balls of pus in the guttural pouches, known as 'chondroids'. The bacteria can be shed from the chondroids and dispersed into the environment via the horses nose and mouth, particularly during times of stress such as travel, potentially infecting horses and ponies that are more susceptible e.g. young/old.

The gold standard way to diagnose 'carriers' is to perform guttural pouch endoscopy. This involves putting an endoscope up the horse's nose and into each guttural pouch. Saline is flushed into each pouch and collected to obtain samples to test for the bacteria itself via PCR testing (looking for the bacteria DNA) and culture (growing the bacteria).

More recent research has shown that many asymptomatic horses (not showing any clinical signs) which were POSITIVE for strangles from samples taken from the guttural pouch have had LOW antibody levels from the blood samples taken. This therefore highlights the risk of FALSE NEGATIVE results for detecting carriers when using the blood test alone.

Any horse that comes back with HIGH antibodies on a blood sample must have samples taken from the guttural pouches for analysis. If a blood test is requested and it comes back as low, then you must be aware that the result could be a false negative.

We always advise a good quarantine protocol to be in place at all yards to enable isolation and monitoring of new horses for approx. 3 weeks before they are allowed to mix with the rest of the horses.

General biosecurity procedures:

- Know your horse's normal vital signs and behaviour
- Practice good hygiene - wash your hands before and after you attend to your horse
- Ensure you keep your horse's grooming kit, feed buckets, rugs etc separate from others to avoid cross-contamination and regularly clean them
- Clean water buckets and feed buckets daily
- Keep the muck heap away from the horses
- Ensure all your horse's vaccinations are up to date
- Make sure everyone on your yard understands the biosecurity protocols set in place
- Isolate all new horses

