

EQUINE OSTEOPATHY

MOTION IS LIFE TO A HORSE!

The essence of the horse is movement. Horses that have freedom of movement in their bodies will feel better and perform their best. They will ultimately be healthier too. True mobility in the horse requires that all joints are free and fully flexible in their range of motion. There are hundreds of joints in the body....spinal joints, ribs, pelvis, sacrum, hind limb and front limb joints and last but certainly not least, the jaw. When these joints are truly mobile then all their supporting structures (soft tissues such as tendons, ligaments, fascia and muscles) have an easier time in their own role of proper motion in the body. Osteopathy is a fantastic way to bring freedom back to the body of the horse, and ultimately to the horse's mind as well.

WHAT IS OSTEOPATHY?

Osteopathy is a system of medicine based on manual manipulation of the body to alleviate pain, restore freedom of movement and enhance the body's own innate healing abilities. Initially it may look a lot like chiropractic however osteopathy also looks at WHY an area of the body has reduced mobility....often there is an *internal* cause of external fixation patterns in joints of the horse.

For example an ovary that has restrictions in its internal attachments or an adhesion or scar from a castration surgery can be the underlying reason for particular fixations in the pelvis and lumbar spine. This will lead to horses that have trouble fully engaging their hind ends, trouble with one lead, asymmetry in movement, stiffness and even a vague lameness of any limb. If the underlying cause is not treated then these restrictions in the body can be permanent. Other things like chiropractic, massage and other treatment approaches will lead to only short term success in cases that have an internal issue causing external fixations. Osteopathy detects and addresses these root internal problems as well as addressing basic mobility problems in any joint. The end result is a more flexible, supple, happier and healthier horse....and these positive changes can be long term with few treatments.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR HORSE NEEDS OSTEOPATHY?

There are 2 basic situations where osteopathy is helpful

1. Your horse has any mobility problem, ranging from lameness to pain or stiffness, or any performance problem (see list below)
2. Your horse has no issues that you are aware of but you want to pro-actively ensure that he/she is moving and feeling their best, unlocking their full athletic and health potential and lessening the possibilities of future injuries or problems

Horses do not need to have obvious issues to benefit from osteopathy...the body is wonderful at hiding things for a while and quietly adapting around "stuck" areas, it is only when they run out of adaptation possibilities that they start to show signs of stiffness, pain or performance issues!

OSTEOPATHY IS HELPFUL IN THESE PERFORMANCE OR BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES

back or neck pain, "cold-backed" horses	subtle or shifting lameness
short-striding	"not right" after a trauma
stumbling, tripping, toe dragging	lack of coordination
head-shaking	poor posture
problems on one lead	sudden change in behaviour
resistance to bending laterally	resistance to round neck or back
difficulty with collection	rider always shifts to one side
difficulty maintaining impulsion	any lack of symmetry in movement
need for training aids	tail swishing, pinning ears, head tossing
bucking, rearing	hypersensitivity when brushed/touched
trouble fully engaging hind end	
cannot stand squarely on all four limbs	
stiffness, lots of warm-up needed	
discomfort with saddle	
refusing jumps	
difficulty standing for the farrier	
lameness unresponsive to conventional approach	
temporary results with chiropractic, acupuncture or massage treatments	

ABOUT DR. LAURA TAYLOR

I graduated from the Ontario Veterinary College in 1989. In the mid-90's I began the journey of understanding what real health is through my studies in various holistic therapies such as veterinary chiropractic, veterinary acupuncture, veterinary homeopathy, herbal medicine, craniosacral therapy and visceral (organ) manipulation for people (form of osteopathy). Formal studies in equine osteopathy eventually filled in all the gaps left behind by other therapies. Osteopathy is for me the most rewarding of allwith an osteopathic approach I can quickly determine deep, unresolved internal issues that are compromising the health and mobility of the horse. In just a few long-

lasting treatments a horse is healthier, happier and with renewed freedom in the body is on the road to greater performance success.