



Orthopaedic Balancing: Post Treatment Responses

Introduction:

This information is being presented to help the horse owner to appreciate the reaction process of the treatment that has just been completed on their animal, so they can have a better understanding of what is a normal response.

Overview:

No matter what the hoof or muscular-skeletal ailment is the most important factor will be to ensure the animal is orthopaedically balanced. This is best carried out through science based trimming and treatment of the upper body of the horse, as this is the only way to return your horse back to a healthy situation. Your horse can feel better short term by applying different shoes or strategies, however long term health will only be achieved with correct orthopaedic stance. In severe cases this is a long slow process, and as the treatment continues the external signs of the animal returning to normal should be apparent. The knowledge gained through identifying the external changes in your horse's body gives us that window as to what is happening internally. Recognising the signs of equine dysfunctional issues and early intervention of treatment will result in the recovery, or best outcome for the horse involved.

Animal's Response:

As your horse deals with the changing orthopaedic stance the nervous system will respond instantly by sending signals back to the brain and then to the rest of the body. As we observe the response of the horse processing these changes, there is a window of opportunity to ensure that your horse is happy with the treatment and changes to the balance of its feet.

As the owner you could see the ramification of your horse dealing with what has just happened develop subtle changes in behaviour and mental status. Upon completing a treatment / trim/shoeing your horse will have to take time to process the changes taking place throughout its body. These changes could present as lameness or soreness as the horse responds to the changes in blood flow and nerve stimulation in the feet and upper body. This is a normal response and should only last for a minimal time (up to 2 weeks in severe cases but normally no longer than 3 days), it is a bit like you experiencing the response to having a numb-foot; tingling pain and not sure if your foot is on the ground. This is similar to what your horse will be feeling as it opens up nerve and blood pathways in its foot and body that have been compromised due to incorrect stance or pressure.

What Can You Do?

You should give your horse at least the day off any type of work or in some cases up to 3 days off and monitor their response, if they show signs of coping with the changes then you can start them back into work in a long and low walking gait (head about wither height) allowing them time to adjust to the changes. Only increasing the work load as your horse can cope with it or as per advised rehabilitation program for your horse. To ensure the best results for your horse please follow any instructions left with you by your consultant and if follow up treatments/ trims/shoeing are required ensure you adhere to the timeframe recommended.

Please contact your consultant if you have any concerns.

