

Treating Injury Naturally
ALTERNATIVE VETERINARY MEDICINE CENTRE

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No one wants to see an injury in a horse, but living is dangerous and sport is more so. Like it or not, injuries will occur. On the positive side, horses are amazingly good healers, given a little help from natural medicine. Only very recently did I see a horse that had been 'savaged' by a bull terrier, while out on a hack. The bites had gone deep into the 'forearm', leaving holes and skin flaps. The wounds have healed without signs of infection or complication, much to everyone's surprise. In this case, the wounds were stitched, but that is not always the correct course of action, since it can 'bottle up' infection in the wound.

I cannot remember the last time I needed to give an antibiotic for an injured horse. The immune and healing capabilities of our horses far outstrip and outflank what conventional wisdom tells us. Another facet of this is that I cannot remember a case in which proud flesh occurred, in a wound treated homeopathically from the outset. This is despite the fact that I have seen some amazing wounds (from kicks, bites, sporting falls, wire injuries, road traffic accidents etc.). However, if proud flesh has occurred, prior to homeopathic input, it is recommended that you should seek properly skilled veterinary homeopathic help. The resolution of such a refractory problem is a complex and challenging procedure.

The therapies that can prove most helpful in injuries are [homeopathy](#), [herbs](#), [LASER](#) and, possibly, [ultrasound](#). [Aromatherapy](#) may help some muscle injuries. There is no need to resort to expensive products, since simple, cheap and easily available remedies are often the best. If there is severe pain, [acupuncture](#) may be very beneficial.

I also believe that a healthy, [natural diet](#) is a vital support to effective healing. I do not advocate compound feeds or supplements, since hay or grass, grown without artificial fertilisers, is the healthiest food. If more energy is required, for

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extensive work, I suggest dried alfalfa (not the molassed products, which are not at all compatible with healthy digestion). Cereals are not a natural diet for horses but, if necessary to provide energy for extreme activity, straight oats can be used. If fed without molassed products, oats will very rarely produce the untoward 'fizziness', with which their reputation has somehow threatened us in modern times. If there is any risk of vitamin or mineral deficiency, we usually devise a basic herb mix to supply these for a patient, depending upon the soil type and diet that it is being fed.

As in all other equine endeavours, the fit and suitability of tack is of vital importance. Harness pads are particularly dangerous, if not properly fitted to your individual horse. I have seen so many bad backs (and consequent hock problems or even spavins) resulting from the pain caused by ill-fitting pads or by the horse's avoidance response (which results in incorrect posture and gait).

Gait problems and consequent injury can also arise from incorrect foot balance. It is imperative that foot balance is perfect at all times, otherwise, the firmer the surface and the more work done, the greater the chronic foot, leg and joint injury potential.

Chiropractic manipulation is an essential maintenance measure, for injury prevention, since pelvic misalignment (for example) will cause undue stresses on the fore limbs and on the back. Any misalignment will lead to compensatory movement, with knock-on injury potential. This is especially true for tendon or suspensory injury.

For ease of reference, I have appended a treatment table. Where LASER therapy is indicated, the 'frequency control' **must** be set according to the energy field of the patient's body. If not, it can disrupt healing. **Do not** be guided by figures supplied in a treatment handbook, since those are not relevant to the individual horse.

Where lotion or poultice is mentioned, those are applied externally. Otherwise medicines are for internal use. Where chiropractic treatment is recommended, this should be performed by a properly registered McTimoney Animal Chiropractor. Where ultra-sound therapy is recommended, frequency considerations are similar to LASER, or serious disruption can occur. Furthermore, careless or over-eager application of ultrasound can damage bone in the area.

More information on these exciting therapies is available on the website: <http://www.alternativevet.org/therapies.htm>

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In all cases of medication, this should either be selected by you yourself or, in more complex cases, prescribed by a veterinary surgeon. Non-veterinary practitioners, pharmacists, herbal manufacturers, chiropractors etc. are **not** allowed to prescribe medicines for horses ([Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966](#)).

There are many other problems that are common in carriage driving horses, which are not of an injury nature. They are more 'metabolic' or 'constitutional'. They include skin problems, sarcoids, sunburn, laminitis and azoturia. These can be covered in a further article, if there is demand.

Natural Therapies for Injuries

Nature of injury	Homeopathy	Herbs	Other
Abrasions, Grazes, Harness Rubs/Burns	<i>Hypericum & Calendula Lotion</i>	Comfrey	Red Laser may be useful
Bruises	<i>Arnica, Arnica Lotion</i>	Comfrey	Infra-red Laser can help deep bruising
Cuts and lacerations	<i>Staphisagria, Arnica, Calendula Lotion</i>	Comfrey Poultice, Aloe vera Gel	Red Laser
Bruising of soles	<i>Hypericum, Arnica</i>	Comfrey	
Nail injury to foot	<i>Ledum, Hypericum, plus Hepar sulphuris if pus has formed</i>	Comfrey Poultice	Adequate, surgical 'opening' of the hole, for drainage
Tendon/Ligament injury	<i>Ruta, Arnica, Arnica Lotion</i>	Comfrey, Comfrey Poultice	Infra-red Laser, Ultra-Sound
Sprains	<i>Ruta, Arnica</i>	Comfrey, Comfrey Poultice	Infra-red Laser
Tail Injury	<i>Hypericum, Arnica, Calendula Lotion if skin is broken</i>		
Bites from horses	<i>Arnica, Hypericum & Calendula Lotion if skin is broken</i>		Red Laser if skin is broken
Bites from insects	<i>Apis, Arnica, Urtica</i>		
Back injury	<i>Rhus tox., Arnica and Ruta, combined</i>	Aromatherapy massage with Rosemary and Lavender	Acupuncture, Chiropractic, Infra-red Laser
Muscle injury	<i>Rhus toxicodendron</i>	Aromatherapy massage with Rosemary and Lavender	
Proud Flesh	Skilled veterinary homeopathic help is required		

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