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Spotlight on The Equine Touch

International Equine Veterinarian Answers Questions on the Equine Touch

Gernot Gaggl, MVDr, is a leading equine veterinary surgeon based in Austria. Apart from allopathic veterinary medicine, Dr. Gaggl is a qualified practitioner in homeopathy, equine acupuncture, equine chiropractic, herbalism and The Equine Touch. Among his clients are the horses of the world famous Spanish Riding School in Vienna. He has been practicing The Equine Touch since 1998.



Jock Ruddock using The Equine Touch on a young foal

1. Why is Equine Touch used?

Mainly muscular problems, spasms, edema, lymphangitis, behavior problems.

2. Is it primarily a healing modality that should be reserved for treating existing problems, or can it be used preventatively?

I personally use it only for treatment of existing problems.

3. What conditions seem to be helped the most by Equine Touch?

Muscular hypertension due to subluxated vertebra, frozen shoulder, neck problems, muscular hypertension due to overexertion, ischiadic (sciatic) pain, hip dysplasia.

4. What things are necessary in performing Equine Touch?

Most important is the correct move, it is important to communicate with the horse, it should be a calm, quiet environment.

5. What is done?

One would have to attend the course to understand. It is simple but complicated to explain.

6. The body is a whole - mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually - does Equine Touch address all these at the same time?

Absolutely, on many occasions I have experienced a complete positive change in all three areas.

7. What modalities does Equine Touch compete with?

In the way I use it there is no modality to compete with ET as the muscle and emotional relaxation is the best out of the methods I know.

8. Does Equine Touch involve subtle energies as well as physical manipulation?

I think both.

9. How can Equine Touch affect the recipient internally?

With emotional relaxation - relaxation also of the intestines, probably through the autonomous nervous system.

10. Is it possible for a case of recurring colic to be helped by Equine Touch?

I think it depends on the cause; if it is due to an imbalance of the autonomous nervous system, I agree.

11. How does Equine Touch allow for the skeletal system to re-align?

Realignment due to relaxation of the muscles. With muscular relaxation the "pain-spiral" is cut: muscle spasm causes reduction in the nutrition of the muscle, less oxygen, therefore anaerobic glycolysis with the formation of lactate in the muscle, this again causes pain and more spasm etc.

12. Do you incorporate the technique with others?

I almost always do a combination of acupuncture and E.T.; E.T. really improved my chiropractic work.

13. What makes the Equine Touch so much more effective than other methods?

Bowen works holistically on the whole body, so there is also emotional, mental and spiritual release.

14. How does the Equine Touch technique differ in hand movement (strokes) from basic massage?

The Equine Touch is much gentler and there is only one movement-technique you have to know.

15. Why is it not recommended to massage after The Equine Touch?

This would disturb the "rebalancing" that follows the moves.

16. Are there any cautions or contraindications for Equine Touch?

One has to be cautious if an area is really painful; a real contraindication for it would be if one uses this method in acute, surgical cases.

17. Is Equine Touch applicable to pregnant mares?

Yes, but I would try to avoid areas where acupuncture points that are forbidden in pregnancy lie. On the other hand this is a balancing method; if the pregnancy is OK, there should be no harm to the animal.

18. Can it be used prior to or during delivery of a foal?

Probably yes to help to relax spasms in the uterus, cervix, vagina.

19. Can it be performed on foals? Is it recommended?

I have no experience with this, but as it also stimulates the immune system it should be of some benefit.

20. Can the older horse or very debilitated horse benefit as well?

Yes, some of the successes in older horses are quite remarkable.

Natural Horse Magazine thanks Dr. Gernot Gaggl for his helpful answers. There will be more in the next issue.