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## Volume 6 Issue 4

### Spotlight On The Equine Touch

#### **The Mystery of the Equine Touch**

By Jill Deming

*Editor's note: We at Natural Horse Magazine congratulate Jill for winning First Prize in the 'Why I would like to learn The Equine Touch' essay contest. Thanks to ALL of you who entered and showed your interest in, and support of, this amazing modality known as The Equine Touch!*

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Jill Deming, 1 st Prize Winner of the Equine Touch Essay Contest

Is there a central organizing principle of touch? There is purported to be a number in nature that organizes the geometry of all leaves, blossoms, flowers, spider webs and every growing thing. Is there a similar principle for touch? Candace Pert, PhD., in her

book, *Molecules of Emotion*, shows how a waterfall of chemicals is released when touch receptors in the body are stimulated. These chemicals help the body to function optimally. John Barnes, PT, the father of Myofascial Release, feels that an objective of Myofascial Release is to remove restrictions that prevent the flow of bioenergy through the tissues. Acupressure is based on the existence of energy pathways within the body. According to Cheryl Schwartz, DVM, the electrical conductivity of the skin at certain points (acupoints) along the meridians is actually greater than that of the surrounding skin. What organizes all of this? After reading the article in *Natural Horse* on the Equine Touch, I was intrigued because it delves into this mystery and utilizes what it finds.

I work with horses as a massage and Myofascial Release therapist, and feel that the Equine Touch would widen the field of possibilities in enabling me to assist horses to heal themselves.

First, it would increase my ability to help horses that have been rescued from abusive situations. Secondly it would enable me to aid those with acute hoof pain. Thirdly, learning the Equine Touch would provide another way for me to help older horses in a therapeutic riding program. Fourth, it would help me relieve Temporo-Mandibular Joint issues and help horses to achieve sacral and pelvic health. Fifth, I believe it would help assist foals in adapting to the world into which they have been born. Lastly, it would provide a bridge between promoting positive changes in the tissue (bodywork) and energy.

I often work with horses that have been rescued from abusive situations. Some injuries are quite serious and it can be a challenge to know where to begin working. When working with horses with badly compromised immune systems, I often feel that they need so much. I've visited the Equine Touch website, and am certain that what Jock and Ivana Ruddock are doing is exactly what these horses need.

I see many horses suffering with acute hoof pain, whether it is from laminitis or another source. Although physical bodywork is quite dynamic, it is limited in the help it can offer horses at an acute stage. I see hoof health as a vital health indicator and a foundation on which to build.

At the local therapeutic riding stable I am impressed by the horses who, despite being old and out of shape, give freely of themselves. It is very apparent that they take special care of their charges, intuitively understanding that the rider is somehow different. They have facilitated remarkable changes in many of the disabled children who ride them. It would be quite wonderful to give back to the horses in a way that they can truly appreciate!

While looking at the Equine Touch website, I was interested to see references to the pelvis, sacrum, and Temporo-Mandibular Joint Syndrome in both the student's forum and the newsletter. I have often felt that these areas are greatly overlooked, and are often the source of great suffering to many horses - in part due to barn management

issues, tack, and the stresses of daily life. Because so many factors influence the health of these parts of the body, it is notoriously difficult to affect lasting positive changes. From what I have read, it looks like the Equine Touch enjoys great success in addressing these issues.

I see a need to work with foals to help them to adapt to domestication from an early age. It saddens me to see colts that are left to their own devices and because of this grow into unmanageable horses. Undoubtedly, this makes for a difficult future. I have always thought that bodywork and imprinting (the work of Robert Miller, DVM) could make a dynamic pair in work with colts, and 'The Equine Touch' sounds like the logical missing link.

It seems to me that bodywork is one part of the equation - assisting the body to make physical changes - and energy work is the other part of the equation, helping the changes to settle into the body and become established. It is very intriguing to me that both energy and physical touch are equivalent components of the Equine Touch and I am fascinated to learn how this can be accomplished.

The world of The Equine Touch seems like an entirely new frontier. I am intrigued by the comments of equine bodyworkers that this work establishes positive changes in the horse for which they have no explanation. It is very tantalizing to not know why something works - it just does! The possibilities are endless. 🙌🙌

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