



# Equine News

## January 2018

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Oklahoma State University

Center for Veterinary Health Sciences

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

IN THIS ISSUE

## Resolution: Get Fit!

by Kris Hiney, PhD, Equine Extension Specialist, Oklahoma State University

Probably the most common New Year's resolution is to get fit. At least that is what the commercials and ads bombarding us this time of year seem to think. This year, think about including your horse in that goal. As an added bonus, it will increase your fitness too!

### Getting Started

If your horse hasn't had much activity in a while, it is a good idea to take a baseline assessment. First, does your horse need to lose weight or gain weight? If his current body condition score is around a 5, he is in a good position to begin training. If he needs to lose weight, beginning an exercise program will be very helpful to achieve these goals, but his workload will be harder initially due to the excessive weight. If your horse is entering the program a bit ribby, you will need to either increase the quantity of food your horse is receiving, or provide a better quality, high calorie diet.

### Assess Your Goals

To prescribe a good fitness program, it is important to understand your goals. There is a distinct program for a reining horse, a competitive trail riding horse or an older horse that just needs to get some exercise or share some time together.

### Hoof Care

Evaluate your horse's hooves carefully. Hooves that are too long or uneven can put undue stress on your horses' tendons. Imagine if you went walking or running around with two different size shoes. Does he need to be reshod? Poorly fitting or loose shoes can alter movement and negatively affect soundness.

### Soundness

Just as with people, it is easier to stay flexible and mobile if you are always active. However, that does not mean that it is impossible to begin a program after some time off. Watch your horse move. Does he show any shortening of stride, hitching of a hind leg, nodding of the head? If so, schedule a visit with your veterinarian to get an assessment. Many older horses will work out of initial stiffness with a proper warm-up, but any unsoundness should be addressed.

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### New Year Fitness

Time to get moving!



### Environmental Control

Dust, Bugs, & Mud—Oh My!

### Horse Owner Tips

Courtesy of Merck Animal Health

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### Tack Fit

If your horse is coming back from a layoff, evaluate your saddle and saddle pad fit. A horse that has been kept in constant condition and fitness tends to have a very different shape to their topline than one that has been out of work. Just because your tack used to fit correctly, does not mean it still does. An uncomfortable saddle fit can quickly lead to back soreness and a justifiably irritable attitude in your horse. In general for a western saddle, your saddle should not contact your horse's wither or spine, should be level, and the slope and the spread of the skirts should match your horse.



### Practice Your Measurements



One of the best indicators of a horse's level of fitness is their heart rate. While there are commercially available products that monitor a horse's heart rate while you are riding, you can reasonably assess fitness by measuring your horse's heart rate either with your fingers or with a stethoscope. Place your fingers under the jaw, alongside their eye or at their fetlock and press gently until you feel the throb of the artery. Time the number of beats for 20 seconds and multiply by three. Repeat for greater accuracy. At rest, your horse's heart rate should be around 36-42 bpm.

Next month we will discuss monitoring your horse's heart rate and creating an exercise program that takes your horse from fat to fit

## Environmental Control Info

by Elisabeth Giedt, PhD, MBA, Director of Outreach & Extension, Oklahoma State University Center for Veterinary Health Sciences

What is your primary management challenge on your property? Do you need the best way to control mud, manage manure and urine, or grazing?

The ASPCA provides many useful webinars for horse owners. Recently Alayne Blicke, host of *Horses for Clean Water* @ <http://www.horsesforcleanwater.com>, presented: *Eco-Friendly Ways to Control Mud, Dust, Bugs & Weeds on Equine Properties*. (<https://www.aspcapro.org/training/webinars>).

This webinar provided many tips for managing horses on your property such as controlling mud, managing manure and urine, and grazing management that are both cost effective and have positive impacts on the environment and health of the horse.

I was reminded in this webinar of the value of owls and swallows in controlling insects on your horse property. I have routinely used and recommended sacrifice paddocks for horses in areas with mud and dust problems.

Speak with your county educator or contact Dr. Kris Hiney or me via email and we can help you solve your challenges.



GO FROM THIS:



to THIS:

## Merck Animal Health

## HORSE OWNER TIPS

## Influenza and your horse

Equine influenza virus (EIV) is one of the most common and contagious infectious upper respiratory diseases in the horse.

- *Equine influenza is caused by highly variable strains of the influenza A (H3N8) virus*
- *Widespread in the equine population of the United States and throughout the world*
- *Nearly 100% infection rate in unvaccinated horse populations that have never been exposed to the virus*
- *Spreads quickly; short incubation period of only one to three days*
- *Horses that travel are particularly susceptible to influenza*
- *Can be transmitted through the air - coughing horses can spread nasal droplets more than 200 yards*
- *Horses that are sick for the first time can shed the virus in nasal secretions for as long as seven to 10 days*
- *Indirect transmission can occur via hands, clothing and common use articles such as brushes, bits and buckets - proper biosecurity measures are critical to preventing disease spread*
- *Recovering horses require a minimum of three weeks of rest or at least one week of rest for every day of fever*

The OSU Veterinary Medical Hospital has been serving horse owners since 1948. We offer routine appointments Monday-Friday and 24 hour emergency service including holidays. The equine medicine and surgery service is staffed by board certified specialists, post-graduate veterinary residents, and senior veterinary students. The service is supported by board certified specialists in other areas of the hospital including anesthesiology, ophthalmology, radiology, cardiology and pathology. Licensed animal health technicians specifically trained in equine internal medicine and surgery assist our veterinarians and provide patient care during the day and after hours.

All members of our team utilize state of the art diagnostic and therapeutic modalities with the common goal of delivering the highest possible standard of compassionate veterinary care to ill or injured horses, while training the equine practitioners and veterinary specialists of the future.

Members of our faculty have special interests in

- internal medicine
- equine surgery
- sports medicine
- rehabilitation
- radiology
- neonatology
- reproduction
- neurology
- ophthalmology
- cardiology
- anesthesiology and pain management
- alternative medicine
- dentistry
- geriatric care

We can perform **endoscopy** exams on horses at work on the treadmill. We can perform **CT** of the head and limbs and **nuclear scintigraphy**. Our imaging techniques also include **digital fluoroscopy** and **ultrasound** of limbs and chest and abdomen. We utilize **complementary medicine** such as acupuncture along with other therapeutic modalities to manage pain and help athletes perform to their potential.

#### Veterinarians Committed to Excellence in Horse Health Care – CVHS Equine Specialists

**Internal Medicine:** Lyndi Gilliam, DVM, PhD, DACVIM; Todd Holbrook, DVM, DACVIM, DACVSMR

**Surgery:** Michael Schoonover, DVM, MS, DACVS, DACVSMR; Daniel J. Burba, DVM, DACVS; Megan Williams, DVM, DACVS

**Reproduction:** Reed Holyoak, DVM, PhD, DACT; Candace Lyman, DVM, DACT

**Anesthesiology:** Marjorie Gross, DVM, MS, DACVA; Kip Lemke, DVM, MS, DACVA

**Ophthalmology:** Margi Gilmour, DVM, DACVO; Emily Sharpe, DVM, DACVO

**Cardiology:** Ryan Baumwart, DVM, DACVIM (Cardiology)

**Radiology:** Corey Wall, DVM, DACVR; Mackenzie Hallman, DVM; Carrie Kuzma, DVM



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Healthy Animals – Healthy People