

Homeopathy in Common Injuries in Sport Horses

ECO-VET spoke to Dr Alex Niven and Prof Cheryl McCrindle for tips and advice

Q: What are the most common injuries in Sport/Endurance horses?

A: A number of articles have shown that the most common general injuries in endurance horses are orthopaedic (lameness) due to various causes.^{11 12 13 14}

The causes for the lameness are different, but the most common are proximal metacarpal pain, followed by foot pain and fetlock pain. Back pain is also commonly seen, especially during events.¹³

Q: What are soft tissue peri-joint injuries?

A: A joint is the part of the body where two or more bones meet to allow movement. Every bone in the body meets up with at least one other bone at a joint.

Soft tissues associated with joints include the joint capsule, containing synovial fluid and ligaments which connect the bones together. Joints are connected to each other by tendons, each of which is surrounded by a tendon sheath, so that groups of joints, for instance in a front leg, can move together when the horse is moving. Reasons for inflammation of these soft tissues include sprains and strains. Sprains involve the soft tissues around the joint itself (such as sprained ankle in humans). Strains are generally due to tears in the fibres of ligaments, or the muscles to which they attach.^{12 13 14}

Q: How do soft tissue peri-joint injuries occur in endurance horses?

A: The main causes of injuries to the soft tissues around a joint occur when the joint is overextended. It often occurs at the trot or canter when there is a sudden change of terrain and surface such as a change from hard packed soil to a soft surface, like deep sand.^{13 14} Galloping on a dirt road with potholes or uneven veld, where the grass camouflages holes, is another.

Incorrect conditioning of a horse is an obvious 'precursor' to any injuries. This can be either under-conditioning OR over-conditioning. Under-conditioning will result in the tissues being more prone to injury during a stressful event as they have not been strengthened enough whilst over-conditioning could lead to the tissues being slightly affected before an event, and this is then aggravated during the event.^{11 12 13 14}

The incidence of bone, joint and tendon injuries is also escalated over time and aggravated by conformational weaknesses, poorly made shoes and nutritional imbalances.^{12 13 14}

Saddles that fit poorly are also seen as a major cause of back pain.^{13 14}

Muscle strains are also common when the horse or rider is unbalanced, usually when they are tired after a long ride.^{12 14}

Q: What are -joint injuries?

A: A joint is the part of the body where two or more bones meet to allow movement. Every bone in the body meets up with at least one other bone at a joint.

Within the joint capsule covering the bones is cartilage. This cartilage can also become worn and damaged over time especially with repetitive concussion, such as running. This is made worse if there is soft tissue injury as the support mechanisms of the joint do not work adequately. This can lead to longer-term injuries such as arthritis and other osseus abnormalities.¹⁵

Q: Can homeopathic remedies be used with other treatment and prevention methods?

A: Yes. These remedies are part of the complete animal health arsenal. They can be used in conjunction with 'normal' allopathic medicines but can also be used with other therapies such as nutraceuticals, acupuncture, physiotherapy, and cooling.

It has been shown that the use of homeopathic remedies can not only enhance therapy outcomes, but also reduce the use of remedies such as COX2's and other medicines which may have negative side-effects and may also have residues which are not allowed during events.

Homeopathic products can also be used in conjunction with each other to widen the issues covered, including using such products as ECO-VET's ECO-ARTH for degenerative joint disease, ECO-HEAL for first-aid treatment, ECO-BONE for ringbone, navicular, and splints and ECO-CIRC for healthy hoof growth.

Q: Can homeopathic remedies be used during events?

A: Absolutely. They can be used before, during and after events. Due to the unique make-up of the medicines, they have no withdrawal periods and no detectable residues.



ECO-VET products as joint support in endurance horses

ECO-JOINT (Reg. No. G3097 (Act 36/ 1947))

This remedy is designed for the treatment of horses with acute and **chronic** joint strains associated mainly with soft tissue injuries

It mainly assists:

- Athletic recovery
- As a performance tonic
- With conditions such as Bursitis, Thoroughpin, Windgalls
- With cramps and muscular spasms
- With hock distention
- With acute and chronic synovitis

ECO-JOINT can be used **before** hard exercise to protect from work-induced injuries. It is also an effective remedy for use immediately **after** hard exercise as an **aid to recovery**.

ECO-LAME (Reg. No. G3302 Act 36/ 1947)

ECO-LAME can be used effectively before hard exercise to protect from work-related injuries and is also an effective medicine for use immediately after hard exercise as an aid to recovery. It is useful as an adjunct treatment for a range of musculo-skeletal disorders.

It mainly assists with:

- Tendon strains and injuries, such as Achilles tendon strains
- Hock strain
- Acute and chronic lameness
- Acute and chronic Sacro-iliac strains
- Pelvic injuries

Another product that works well in the treatment of endurance horses is:

ECO-HEAL (Reg. No. G33044 Act 36/ 1947)

ECO-HEAL is a first-aid treatment for:

- Abrasions, cuts, injuries, and haematomas
- Pain due to inflammation (Eco-Heal acts as a natural anti-inflammatory)
- Blocked nose, catarrh, coughing, pharyngitis and tracheitis.
- Neck discomfort and stiffness
- Superficial abscesses
- Osteo-Arthritis (relieves pain and promotes recovery after hard exercise).

Administering ECO-VET products to horses

The remedies are easily administered orally in small doses (see package inserts).

As an example, the dosage for horses is 5ml of the ECO-VET remedy mixed with 5ml water in a 10ml syringe, administered orally.

References

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