

Riding Performance

Horseback riders strive to develop a specific muscle memory and use their bodies in a unique way. They strive to become one with their horses and move as a single unit.

Energy is transferred from the activity of the horse's hind legs into the horse's sacrum and from there into the sacrum of the rider.

If the rider is unable to maintain what is called an independent seat, their lack of control will hinder the quality of movement of the horse.

Body Stress Release helps the rider to use their body optimally, developing balance, rhythm and an independent seat.

Imbalances in the rider's body, more tension on one side than the other in the back and/or hips may hinder the rider from sitting in a balanced position and hinder or restrict the horse's natural movement. The rider may experience this type of imbalance as a feeling that the stirrups are of uneven length even though they are equally long. These imbalances in the rider can also cause stiffness, discomfort and uneven muscle development in the horse over time!

Developing the sense of balance and rhythm requires constant practice and repetitive muscle actions which are more easily achieved when the rider follows a regular Body Stress Release program. Body Stress Release for the horse is also very helpful.

Causes of Body Stress Overload

Stress becomes a negative, destructive factor in life when it goes beyond the individual's ability to adapt to it. When the point of stress overload is reached, instead of the stress being released from the body, it becomes stored within the body as "body stress". As we differ in our emotional and physical makeup, we have varying degrees of susceptibility to stress overload.

Mechanical Stress Factors

The body is designed to withstand a certain amount of physical force - bumps, jerks and falls, but if the mechanical stress goes beyond the body's limit of adaptability, the effects may become stored as body stress. Falls from horses during riding are common sources of stress overload and the severity of injury varies according to the way the person landed. Repetitive strain is another factor which causes body stress in riders and horses. Riding puts constant pressure on the horse's back, and along with the movements it is asked to perform, the horse also suffers repetitive strain and body stress.

Emotional / Mental Stress Factors

Riders will often remark on how their mount will pick up on their state of mind at the time of riding, often sensing suppressed emotions of grief, deep sadness or irritability. We know that intense anger, anxiety or shock may cause the rider to tense the shoulder and neck muscles. A state of on-going depression will also bring about postural distortions which may hinder the riding experience and often have an adverse effect on the animal. In addition, the physical discomfort resulting from the body stress will reinforce the negative emotions and lead to a vicious cycle.

Chemical Stress Factors

The sources of chemical stress include pollutants in the air, insecticides and certain food additives and preservatives. Harmful chemicals may be consumed, inhaled, or even absorbed when contacting the skin. Very often an infection such as the flu or cold virus will result in neck stress.

The Effects of Body Stress

When the point of stress overload is reached, the stress becomes "locked" into the body and manifests as lines of tension.

The body adopts a protective mode of action, causing adjacent and overlying muscles to splint the area. While the stress or tension remains stored in the body, the normal tone of the body is disturbed, causing a reduction in its general efficiency.

Because body stress exerts pressure on nerves, it leads to a disturbance of the body's communication system. It could be described as a disruption in the normal life energy flow in the body.

Real-life Cases

A teenager excelling in vaulting has been a regular BSR client for a number of years. Riding both competitively and non-competitively and sometimes taking a tumble she has found BSR invaluable in finding relief from a stiff neck and shoulders and often a painful coccyx. Her BSR practitioner has always urged her to book a consultation as soon as possible after a fall. If caught in time the superficial stress incurred after an injury will unlock more readily.

A retired race horse owner in her 70's with a hip replacement sees her BSR practitioner regularly to ensure that her body remains stress free and she is able to maintain her daily riding experience.

A rider in her 40's knows that it is time to book a BSR session with her practitioner when she notices that she is not sitting straight in the saddle and it feels as though her stirrups are of uneven length. After a release she feels balanced again.

Body Stress Release Technique

This technique is designed to help the body release its stored tensions.

With the person fully clothed and lying down, the practitioner carries out a series of tests to locate the exact sites of body stress, and determines the precise directions in which the lines of tension exist. This is achieved by applying light pressure to various points of the body and observing the response. In this way, the body acts as a biofeedback mechanism, supplying the information required. The technique is used effectively on horses too.

The practitioner then applies stimuli, by means of light but definite pressure, in the exact directions necessary to encourage the body to release the stored tension.

For first time clients, three initial sessions are highly recommended as the body may go through adaptations that need to be attended to.

If the body stress has occurred recently, the process of releasing it is usually very rapid. However, if the stress has been stored for a long time, the stress releases may have to be carried out a number of times, over a period. This is because the tight, protective layers of the muscles tend to relax by degrees back to their normal tone.

Because Body Stress Release works with the body's natural striving to be stress free, it is a gentle procedure that does not require force

NOTE: *Body Stress Release is not a diagnosis or treatment of any condition or disease. It is concerned only with locating and releasing stored tension, so that the body is assisted in its in-built ability to maintain and heal itself.*

Who Needs Body Stress Release?

In **horse riders**, the head shoulders and arms are the most vulnerable body parts in injury.

Most injuries occur as a result of falling off the horse. In some cases the horse has fallen onto the rider as well. The rider may also fall on their shoulder or head or land heavily on their coccyx. The severity of the injury also depends on the surface onto, how they land and how fast the horse is going at the time.

It is a fact that you cannot tone or build strength in tense muscles. In order to maximise fitness it makes sense to have stored tension released so that the muscles can function optimally. Because body stress exerts pressure on nerves it leads to a disturbance in the body's communication system. This is true in both humans and horses.

Horses also suffer body stress, being athletes in their own right. Saddle fit, unbalanced riders, a trip or stumble on uneven ground and repetitive strain are all examples of factors that affect the wellbeing and discomfort in a horse. Being a prey animal in the wild they seldom show pain or discomfort until it is severe and they have been compensating for a tight muscle or injury to the extent that they become lame. Very often when the horse starts being "naughty" when being ridden or does not want to be saddled up or bucks or refuses to jump it is in pain or the movement it is asked to do causes pain. Body Stress Release is very effective in helping horses too. Generally they respond very well after one session.

Not only can Body Stress Release assist the body in its recovery from and prevention of injury, freedom from stored tension allows increased energy and flexibility, enhancing performance potential



Body Stress Release

Unlocking tension
Restoring self-healing

Horse Riders and Horses

BODY STRESS RELEASE: assists the body in its in-built ability to maintain and heal itself. It is a gentle procedure, in which areas of body stress are located, using the body as a biofeedback monitor. Light, precise stimulation encourages the body to release stored tensions, which usually manifest as backache, headaches, postural distortions or fatigue. Releasing is rapid, but if stress has been stored for a long time, more releases may be required over a period of time.

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