

April 2011

HORS-E-NEWS

 EQUUS Muscle Management
The Emmett Technique for Horses

The official e-newsletter from
Equus Muscle Management



Before we leap into the news.....

We would like to extend our thoughts and best wishes to everyone in Australia who has been affected by flood and cyclone. We know that it is still ongoing in many areas and countless people are still without a home. The Christchurch earthquake is a devastating event for our friends in New Zealand with precious lives lost there too and huge destruction to their beautiful city. Topped off by the Japanese earthquake, tsunami, radiation and incredible loss of life, watching their events go from horrific to worse, one wonders how they will ever begin again. It has been a torrid start to 2011.

Welcome to the April edition of Hors-e-news.

We have had a busy start to the year with courses and have enjoyed some great days of learning. We will share some highlights and photos in this edition of Hors-e-news as well as a follow up article on saddle fit.

Firstly.....

Our journey to the United Kingdom is almost upon us and we are very excited about presenting Level 1 horse courses in England and Ireland.

Andy Eckley, our UK co-ordinator, can be contacted through the UK website www.equusmusclemanagement.co.uk.

Andy will be happy to hear from you and answer any questions and queries you may have. Bookings can be made directly through the online registration system on the site. The level 1 course is open to horse owners and equine professionals alike and we are very honoured to have the privilege of sharing this wonderful work with horse lovers overseas.

Practitioner Certificate

We still get lots of emails asking if our courses are recognised and the answer is yes. We are affiliated with the International Institute for Complementary Therapists (IICT) and membership and insurance are available for Australians and New Zealanders who have completed the practical level 4, required electives, case studies and have been awarded an Equus Muscle Management Practitioner Certificate. If you have trained with us in the past

and would like some information about how to update your qualification, please drop us a email and we will send all the details through to you.

Alternatively, if you would like to train with us, the next Level 1 Horse course is on August 13th and 14th 2011 and will be held in Woombye, Queensland.

The details and downloadable application forms are available on the [website](#) and as always if you require further information please feel free to contact us

Our first Level 2 course for 2011 included the hoof elective and was presented by Peter Laidely from Hoofworks Australia.



We have enjoyed an excellent start to the year as far as training goes with a new group joining us on the 12th and 13th February for level 1 of our first accredited course.

A great weekend for all of us followed by level 2 on the 26th and 27th February which incorporated the hoof elective with a 'Barefoot, Body, Balance' day presented by Peter Laidely from Hoofworks Australia.

Peter brought along a selection of cadaver hooves to illustrate his training and led us through a dead leg dissection that really brought home the basic function of the hoof the whole lower forelimb and presented us with a clear picture of how hoofs problems affect movement and muscles affect the hoof and vice versa.

If you would like more information on Peters methods you can find him at

www.hoofworksaustralia.com

You do not have to be one of our students to join us for a hoof day so if you would like to be kept in the loop about upcoming events, drop us an email and we will add you to our mailing list.

Advanced training days for our practitioners will include dissection workshops so as to ensure our therapists have a true working knowledge of the issues, muscles and dis-functions they are treating. Eligible people are advised of practitioner days well in advance and due to the nature of the work, numbers are limited.

Level 3 on the 26th March really highlighted the dedication of our group with some beautiful work being done. Ross from Horseland Forest Glen joined us to share his knowledge on saddle fitting and we would like to share a little more of

that type of information with you all in a series of articles over the next couple of newsletters. The first one is included below and covers the most common mistake when fitting a saddle and some of the symptoms we see caused by this issue.




Level 3 Group

Many thanks again to Keith Low, his staff and his wonderful horses at Glenelg Equestrian Centre down at Woombye. This is an excellent venue and we are very grateful for Keith's continued support.

Shena, ever present and hardworking, organising horses, leading out and joining in, you are invaluable; thank you!!

Georgina Roth, our amazing co-instructor, co-ordinator, we could not do without you! Thank you, thank you, thank you for seamlessly putting together course after course.





**Level 4 Practical day 9th
April 2011**

Course Dates 2011/12

QUEENSLAND

Level 1 13th/14th Aug 2011
Level 1 10th/11th Sept 2011
Level 2 5th/6th Nov 2011
Level 3 29th/30th Jan 2012
Level 4 25th/26th Mar 2012

UNITED KINGDOM

Level 1 Courses

May 28th/29th 2011 South West
England. (Exeter)

June 4th /5th 2011 South East
England. (Tunbridge Wells)

June 8th/9th 2011 North East
England. (Co. Durham)

June 14th/15th 2011 North
West England. (Blackpool)

First Graduates of the new Practitioner Course - Level 4 Practical

Our first group of level 4 participants completed the practical element of the new accredited practitioner course on the 9th April 2011.

It was great to see the 'new' people step up, putting the finesse on their technique and also to see many people from the past, (the early days), come back to join us again.

The course dates for the remainder of 2011 have now been locked in and are include in the green box above. They are also on the website as are the application forms.

We encourage all our students to join us for revision regularly. This not only helps you to refine your technique but also keeps you up to date with changes.

If you have trained with us in the past and would like to complete your practitioners certificate, please contact us

and we will forward you the requirements to continue.

There is no doubt about it though; It is the people who make the course so thank you all for sharing your weekend with us.

We will look forward to hearing of your progress, receiving your case studies and remember we love to hear your feedback.

Sharing your experiences is the best way to help yourself and others learn and grow, this builds confidence and understanding, so please let us know how you are doing.

Remember, the keys to your horses comfort, flexibility and performance are in your hands.©



International Institute for
Complementary Therapists
**IICT APPROVED
TRAINING PROVIDER**

'The book of knowledge is right there in front of you, all you have to do is learn to read it.'

Don Emmett ©

SADDLE FIT

This is the first in a series of information on saddle fit to share with you as therapists, owners and trainers.

Poor saddle fit is the most frequent cause of pain we see as therapists and the most common error is placing the saddle too far forward.

As trainers and competitors, we spend many hours changing horse's habits and bad behaviour and getting them to work in a frame. What we often overlook is the cause of their reluctance and unwillingness.

Saddle sore and girth sore horses can appear anxious when saddling up or may even bite or kick when you lift the saddle onto their back.

Often called 'cold backed', the saddle sore horse may buck or pigroot at the beginning of the ride, they may be uncomfortable when ridden down hill, disengaged in the hindquarter and tend to trip and stumble on the forehand.

At other times they may start out nice and calm but will want to speed up during the ride until their behaviour deteriorates completely.

Rubbed areas under the saddle (galls) and the tell tale white hairs in the wither area and under the saddle seat tell the story along with damage (thickening scarring and atrophied muscle) which is the body's attempt to protect itself from the real damage being done to the bones and the spine.

The above are symptoms of a period of **very poor** saddle fit. Unfortunately, now, we commonly see a more insidious problem and that is saddles that don't quite fit correctly and this slightly 'off' fit is now being considered normal or OK. This is becoming increasingly common with low cost saddles being purchased from ebay and online stores.

The horse will present with only moderate soreness and will tend to slightly drop their back under

saddle and appear to work a little stiffly. Because of this, they will lose power from the hindquarter as they have to counter the stiffness through the back.

In the training arena, many futile hours of work are undertaken trying to train the horse to round up and work off the hindquarter. As training progresses, behavior problems develop in order to avoid the discomfort now caused by these cheaper, incorrectly fitted saddles. It is impossible for the horse to comply with the riders instruction due to pain and discomfort, the cause of which the cause has not been addressed.

For horses training at a high level, saddle fit has to be near perfect as even minor discrepancies will compound into major problems.

We have found that the most common error when fitting a saddle is to place it too far forward, this puts the front of the saddle panels over the back of the shoulder blade which interferes with the extension of the foreleg.

Having the saddle sit too far forward results in a tightness and pinching of the muscles in the wither area and results in a short, choppy stride. The horse may stumble and feel slightly uncoordinated and this movement can mimic the symptoms of navicular disease. (often misdiagnosed)

A saddle that is placed too far forward may appear to fit, but this only shows that the saddle's gullet is too wide. The saddle will slip back into its naturally correct



Thank you to Ross from Horseland Forest Glen for sharing your information with our level 3 students

position. This perceived problem is mistakenly overcome by fitting a breast plate.

Due to 'bridging' or 4 point contact of the saddle panels in this incorrect position, muscle soreness will then often develop as the effectiveness of the saddle panels is decreased.

Finally if the saddle is too far forward, it is sloping uphill on the horse. This throws the riders weight back toward the cantle and behind the horse's centre of gravity resulting in lumbar pain, weakness and balance issues. Riser pads are generally used (unsuccessfully) to level the saddle.

The world standard for saddle placement on a 16hh horse is; the front of the panels at the tree point of the saddle, be aligned 2-3 fingers widths behind the top of the shoulder blade.

There are many accessories available today, designed to help when a saddle doesn't quite fit. There is nothing that can replace a correctly fitted saddle and by purchasing a cheap saddle and using gimmicks to 'correct' it, you are doing a great dis-service to both your horse and your wallet.

Thank you all

for joining us and we trust that you enjoyed sharing our news. Remember we love to hear from you too so please drop into the [website](#) or at [Facebook](#) and leave us a comment.

If you prefer to contact us privately, please feel free to [email us](#) instead. We read each and every comment and email and love to hear your feedback so please don't be a stranger!

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