



HORSEMANSHIP HEALTH & HEALING

with Mel Fleming & Tony Robinson

Poulticing to improve Health and Performance

Horses can store a lot of toxins in their bodies that are not otherwise eliminated through the bladder and kidneys. If the body is under stress emotionally or physically, or horses are fed feeds that are not complimentary to them, or they pick up toxins from the many chemicals that are in general use today the bladder and kidneys can become overloaded and are not able to function efficiently to purify and cleanse the body. These toxins can be stored all over body but particularly in the feet and legs. The feet and legs are like a drainage system for the excess toxins in the body.

The feet and legs themselves can also pick up infections, viruses, or toxicity from chemicals through the skin, or through the sole and wall of the foot. This build up of toxins inhibits performance, leads to discomfort, stiffness, disease and general poor health. Usually these symptoms come on slowly causing horses to age quicker and develop chronic soundness issues which are usually looked upon as unpreventable and inevitable wear and tear. These toxins can be released through various forms of body work therapies, supplementing with detoxifying herbal remedies, poulticing the body to draw toxins out through the skin and soaking the feet. Ideally using combinations of all of the above will give the best results.

Good horse care management practices should include regular care of the horse's feet and legs including soaking the feet, massaging



The circle marked with chalk indicates a kidney area for the horse. If the muscles are tight and hard in this area or the area is raised up this indicates a build up of toxicity in this area.



The area marked here is a bladder area. If it feels thick or congested through here it indicates toxicity build up and bladder issues. Bladder and kidney issues will restrict the hocks and the hindquarters of the horse.

the legs, poulticing the legs and the application of good hoof dressings. In this article we will be focusing on using poulticing to cleanse the body. The higher the level of performance that you are expecting or the more physical exertion the horse is under for example sport horses, race horses, cutting horses or event horses the more important this will be. A lot more behavioural problems than most people realize are stemming from problems in the body. I have had problem horses as projects all my life, the ones that most other people would give up on or not waste their time on. More and more over the years I have realized that through healing the body a lot of behaviour problems are resolved.

Toxicity in the legs restricts circulation, stiffens joints leading to arthritis and other joint disorders. It tightens muscles, tendons, ligaments and sinews, shortening the stride and restricting movement and the tension here can even lead to the rest of the body posture being pulled out of balance and alignment. After an injury or strain, poulticing can be used to draw out heat or infection.

Even very old injuries, especially those ones where there is still scar tissue or some deformity where the leg has not returned entirely to its normal shape being enlarged, thickened or raised up, will benefit enormously

through poulticing. This deformity or scar tissue simply means that complete healing has not occurred and the injury will still be having some ill effect on the horse's health and or performance. Windgalls, bog spavin, bowed tendons, arthritis, puffy stiff joints, puffiness around the tendon areas are all examples of congestion and accumulation of toxicity in the body. Legs that are over bent at the knees or the reverse are the result of tendons that are too tight and can be corrected through treatment with 'Universal Energetic Mind and Body Work' and poulticing the legs.

One of the products that we have found very effective and easy to use is **Tuffrock** Poultice. It is the first electrically charged poultice produced and is made from volcanic rock. It has drawing qualities beyond any other manufactured poultices that we have come across so far. After poulticing we have often been astounded by what is drawn out of the legs, occasionally the legs will swell several hrs after removing the poultice and can be quite hot. This just indicates that the first layer of rubbish has been shifted and now that area is refilling as the body is stimulated and sends more "rubbish" to that area for removal. The legs may become swollen and hot as the heat and infection that was hidden in there becomes visible as it is shifted out. If this happens don't panic just hose the legs to cool them.



This horse was very tight over the kidney area and also felt thick and congested in the bladder area so the whole rump and loin area was poulticed with **Tuffrock** and left over night.

Applying a cooling product such as the Savvy Touch Cooling Gel can give relief and help the healing process. Wait until the heat and swelling have settled before poulticing again. You will notice big improvements in your horses after these treatments.

Between midnight and midday is the cleansing time for the body so poulticing during this time period will lead to maximum results. I usually do it in the evening and leave it on over night. Washing the area to be poulticed and then allowing the area to dry before applying the **tuffrock** is recommended. Wash the area again with shampoo to remove the **Tuffrock** and

also to cleanse the hair and the skin removing anything that has been pulled out from the body so that it is not reabsorbed by the body. What I would usually notice after washing the **Tuffrock** off is that the muscles would feel softer but often 12 hrs later they would feel tight and hard again.

Occasionally they have felt harder than before the poultice was put on. This is actually a positive sign. What has happened is that the body has been stimulated and more “rubbish” in the body has moved into that area ready to be pulled out. So you just poultice again. The area will keep filling until all the rubbish has been shifted out of the body.

HOW TO APPLY A TUFFROCK POULTICE TO THE LEGS



Here is my apprentice Shannon Davies poulticing one of the horses.

1. Wash the legs with a soft brush and shampoo and allow them to dry.
2. Apply the Tuffrock poultice thickly from below the knee to the fetlock or even better go

all the way to the coronet. The poultice can be used just like this and the legs left unwrapped and this can be good way to initially assess the legs as you will see where the poultice dries more quickly and more slowly. The areas that stay moist the longest are the areas where there are more problems. Thirty to forty mins after applying the Tuffrock is a good time to go back to observe this.





3. For better results wrap the leg in plastic wrap. This holds the heat in for more drawing power and keeps the poultice moist so it keeps working for longer.



5. Apply the bandage firmly but taking care not go too tightly. I like to use stable bandages rather than exercise bandages as they are not as stretchy

and thereby lessen the chance of being over stretched and applied too tightly.



4. Place a foam or gamgee leg pad over the plastic wrap before bandaging to ensure that there are no pressure spots on the legs and lessen the chance of restricting circulation with the bandage.

It may be a good idea especially if the horse hasn't been bandaged before or you are not a very experienced bandager or if there are a lot of prickles and burrs around to leave the horse locked up while the bandages are on. Again poulticing between midnight and midday will give the most benefit.

The best part of the process is unwrapping the bandage and observing the legs noticing the heat and wetter and dryer areas. Wash the legs with shampoo and observe again. Sometimes several hours after poulticing the legs they may swell and fill up as described earlier.

For health and performance it is critical to help the body get rid of these toxins in the legs. The feet and legs are an area where there is generally not enough understanding or attention paid and you will notice significant improvements in your horses through investing more time and attention here.

For more information on Tuffrock Poultice go to www.tuffrock.net or you can purchase the product from www.naturalequipment.com.au

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