

High Performance, Deluxe Leg Treatment

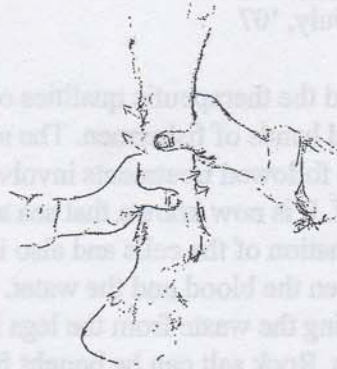
Whisperer, July, '07

Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, discovered the therapeutic qualities of sea water by noticing the healing affects it had on the injured hands of fishermen. The sea water not only restricted infection risks, but patients who followed treatments involving the use of seawater found that it also promoted pain relief. It is now known that sea salt therapy is an effective treatment that assists in the rejuvenation of the cells and also induces a healthy exchange of minerals and toxins between the blood and the water. After a workout, a cold rock salt rub will aid in cleansing the waste from the legs by the abrasive rubbing, and will bring rejuvenation to the cells. Rock salt can be bought from the grocery or hardware store. This is the same salt that is used in making ice cream. (Always test a patch of skin before performing this therapy).

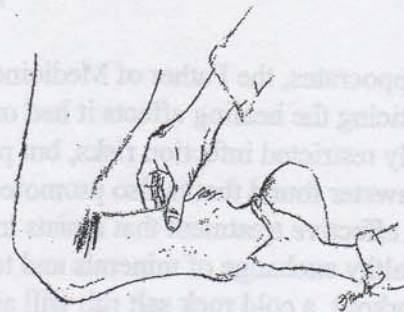
Place two cups of rock salt in a bowl, then add enough cold water to cover it. Grab two handfuls of the cold mixture and rub vigorously up and down the leg from top to bottom, then back up, ending in rubbing towards the heart. Completely rinse the salt out with cold water.

Next, run a warm water rinse over the legs, including the upper legs. If you use herbs for pain or swelling, now is a good time to add a nice, warm, herb compress. This can be done by making a hot tea and soaking a cotton or flannel rag with it. Wrap the lower legs with the rag, and wrap with cellophane wrap (like Saran Wrap) to keep the moisture in. Some of the herbs known to control inflammation and relieve pain are; Chamomile, Comfrey, and Arnica which opens capillaries and increases circulation. A company called "Weleda" makes a great arnica oil which I use at the end of my leg treatments. A nice Comfrey compress can be especially relieving to arthritic joints. I use a Comfrey Compress on most of my athletic clients. The leaves can be purchased at the health food store in bulk, and it can be pre made into a strong tea and brought to your client in a thermos for hot application. While it's on the legs for 20 - 30 minutes, you can work on another part of the body. Again, test the product on a patch of skin first. Follow the warm water rinse (or compress) with a gentle wringing stroke from the hoof, up to the upper leg. Wring out the debris as if you were wringing a dishrag, hand, opposite hand. Go easy because the connective tissue will be softening and moving with your stroke. Your goal is to loosen the skin enough to allow the blood and fluid to flow through freely. You don't want to traumatize the tendons and ligaments in this area, but you do want to move the debris that has been loosened during your massage work.

Follow this stroking with a Chucking Stroke. This is a pinching and gliding motion performed up the back of the leg. It is meant to move the skin that may be adhered to the long tendons and ligaments in this body part. Follow the Chucking Stroke with another Wringing up the leg towards the heart. End the massage part with a final cold water rinse. Always end your Hydrotherapy treatments with cold.



Wringing



Chucking

Now, dry the legs with a vigorous rubbing with a fluffy towel. Because this area is prone to drying and dandruff, end your session by applying a lotion or oil that is not attractive to bugs and flies (Arnica oil is nice). Use a gentle petrissage stroking to be sure that the product is absorbed through the hair to the skin of the legs. Baby powder works for this purpose too.

If you wrap your horse for standing in the stall, or for stocking up, now is a good time to do it before the fluid begins to stock. Be sure to leave a little extra room for normal blood flow to return because the blood is in other places at this time. This is a nice treatment to use after hard exercise. This treatment is in no way meant to replace Veterinary Care for injured legs. Here's a review;

- 1) Rock Salt Rub
- 2) Cold Water Rinse
- 3) Warm Water Rinse
- 4) Hot Herb Compress
- 5) Wringing Up The Leg
- 6) Chucking
- 7) Cold Water Rinse
- 8) Dry With Towel and Vigorous Rub
- 9) Rub with Lotion, Oil, or Powder
- 10) Wrap, if Necessary

Your horse should be allowed to rest after this treatment. He should have plenty of fresh, clean water, and a place to lay down. Checkout www.herbsnhorse.com for information on herbs for horses that you might use with your hydrotherapy treatments. Also, a new book has just been released about understanding the uses of Hydrotherapy. *An Introduction to Heat and Cold as Therapy* Laurel Fowlie RMT, BA, Med. The above treatment is shown for an apparently healthy athletic horse. Remember, if you suspect injury or heat illness, a veterinarian should be called before performing any therapy program.