



Horse Breather

Equine Breathing ezine February 06 issue 15



www.equinebreathing.com

In Practice Lazy horses

Many people share their concern and distress with me about 'lazy horses'. They know their horse is not right but often tests have shown no pathogens or anatomical problems and it is difficult to know what to do. Changing feed or management regime may have some effect, but the horse's energy levels do not seem to be what they should be.

I don't believe in lazy horses. I had a discussion with a vet who said that some horses were just lazy. When I disagreed he said "So you don't think that there are lazy people either?". That is right – I don't believe that some people are just lazy.

I am naturally a fit and active person but for 15 years I suffered from ME. Every action (even down to minute gestures, talking, or even thinking, at times) was an effort and required the use of will power. I spent a large proportion of my time 'psyching myself up' to perform simple tasks such as walking though to another room, and also planning and budgeting in order to spend the least energy on jobs. Being called lazy in such circumstances is extremely hurtful, especially as that is the foremost thought in your own mind much of the time – "Why am I like this – am I just lazy?"

Luckily I came across Buteyko breathing and answered my own question. The cause of my fatigue was that I was breathing too much which resulted in a loss of carbon dioxide. Low carbon dioxide levels in my body meant that among other things, not enough oxygen was available to the cells of my muscles, brain and other organs. The cells had to switch from aerobic to anaerobic respiration. Only 5% of the energy produced by aerobic respiration is available through anaerobic respiration, and lactic acid is made as a by product. Build up of lactic acid in muscles is painful. So the reason for the extreme lethargy and pain felt by sufferers of ME (or to some extent by anyone that is breathing too much) is purely physiological and nothing to do with laziness.

As soon as I learnt to control my breathing, I was profoundly relieved and overjoyed to find that exercise actually increased my energy levels rather than exhausting me. At one time, early in my recovery, I went dancing 4 times a week because my body craved the healing exercise.

So my view is, "No, people and horses are not lazy – but many of them are over breathing which causes lethargy which can be confused with laziness. However, lethargy caused by physiological imbalance is **reversible** - through use of Buteyko or Equine Breathing."

I do believe that apparent 'laziness' in people and horses can be caused by depression and boredom. But again, regaining normal breathing should have a significant beneficial effect on these states. A person that retrains their breathing is likely to change their own lifestyle as normal physiology returns in order to provide conditions that are better suited to them.

Horses though, are very much subject to their owners' ideas of how they should be managed. To determine whether we are causing depression or boredom we have to look very carefully at the horse's husbandry. Are all the horse's needs truly being met? Remember, horses are flight, prey, herd animals, with very different needs from our own. Putting a horse in "a nice warm stable" or a "nice warm rug" may be meeting our own needs (or convenience) rather than the horse's.

Another reason for laziness may be tension. The highly schooled horse who's energy deteriorates through the schooling session may be tensing against pressure that the rider is unaware they are creating.

Horses that have some degree of lethargy (and even some that are not yet showing any signs of it) often seem to conk out completely during and after Equine Breathing sessions.

Horses that over breathe are likely to have adrenaline levels raised long term (rather than for short brief periods), keeping them in an aroused state in which

Contents

In Practice
Lazy Horses

FAQ
1N on a wild pony

routine maintenance and repair of the body is neglected. Equine Breathing enables the adrenaline levels to drop, and sometimes this reveals the underlying exhausted state of the horse.

When the horse conks out they seem to be deeply relaxed and peaceful. Having reduced the adrenaline production the horse is in the 'anabolic' state in which there is increased production of immune system cells, increased cell repair and growth and increased energy storage, in other words, a healing state.

However, some horses relax very deeply and are unwilling to rouse themselves for a while. This can be a nuisance if you had intended to ride after Equine Breathing but your horse is firmly asleep and not keen to wake up! In this case do a short session before riding (as long as possible but stop before the horse becomes too relaxed) and then do a longer session after riding when the horse can sleep for as long as they like.

After a while (variable depending on method of Equine Breathing used and on the horse) the horse's energy levels will pick up as more oxygen becomes available to them. But healing is an intense process so do not be surprised if your horse goes through further 'tired' phases. These usually diminish in intensity through the healing period.

If you have performance horse in competition training, it may be an idea to keep the Equine Breathing very light until you have a week or so when the horse can be allowed to relax right down if need be. The benefits of Equine Breathing for performance horses are explained at

www.equinebreathing.com/ailments.htm

so its worth finding time for your horse to do this if you can.

FAQ

1N on a wild pony

Coco is a young filly, just starting her second year. She has been with me for ten months and was rescued from the abattoir, having spent the first year of life (ish) running wild with no contact with the human race. After several months in my care, she has learned to trust me and other humans and is a friendly, happy pony.

When I tried 1N with others in my herd, and they took most of the first session to start to enjoy it, having initially raised their heads or snorted. So when I just decided one day to try 1N with Coco I thought I was silly as I was in the field, with no head restraint at all but, hey! who said I have ever been sensible!

Imagine my surprise when she just totally accepted the 1N right from the start! This formerly wild pony happily accepted the strange actions of her human, chilling almost immediately and letting her head gradually sink. She seemed to enjoy it all from the first moment.

I can't help but wonder just what it is that we do to our poor equine friends when a wild pony can accept so much so readily.

Kathy, Herts UK

That's it for this month. I hope you find **Horse Breather** interesting. I would love to hear your views so do send an email to clare@equinebreathing.com.

till next month
breathe easy!
Clare

The contents of this ezine are not a substitute for veterinary advice. If the reader has any concerns they should seek independent professional advice from a vet.



Bjork conked out after 1N

More of Bjork's story in **Horse Breather** issue 16