



Horse Breather

Equine Breathing ezine

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www.equinebreathing.com

In Practice

Starting Equine Breathing

Why would you want to start using Equine Breathing?

The most obvious reason is to help any horse that is suffering from a chronic ailment such as arthritis, sweet itch, COPD, colic, allergies etc or from behavioural problems such as anxiety, head shaking, wind sucking, cribbing.

Equine Breathing enables you to help your horse in their recovery from chronic conditions.

Even in cases where most options have been tried and there is not much hope left it may be worth trying Equine Breathing. Owners have found that after starting Equine Breathing horses that had been diagnosed as hopeless cases made a recovery.

A second reason is to gain an advantage in competition riding. It seems that horses that have regained their normal breathing pattern;

- have more stamina and endurance
- are less likely to sustain injuries
- heal from injuries and training stresses more quickly
- learn and are able to concentrate better in training and in competitions and
- are more relaxed under pressure enabling better performance.

A third reason is that Equine Breathing has a de-stressing effect. Although it can be used for the first time on a horse that is highly distressed and potentially dangerous, it makes sense to start improving the breathing before the stressful situation arises. For example any horse that is going to be moved to a new home would benefit from breathing training, so that when the event arrives, they are

- a) in a better mental state to deal with it and
- b) respond quickly to Equine Breathing done at the time to help them through the stressful event.

Similarly young horses that are going to start their training are likely to manage better if their breathing pattern is close to optimum.

A fourth reason is that doing Equine Breathing can have a fascinating effect on the relationship between horse and handler. Almost any horse may benefit and appreciate the handler's efforts. This can be especially pleasing for children and for those looking to gain confidence in their horse skills.

Further reasons include:

- financial considerations (its free!),
- using a method that is natural,
- being able help improve your horse's health yourself and
- being able to give your horse an enjoyable, relaxing experience.

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Equine Breathing a young horse at his first show

FAQ

How can breathing possibly have such a powerful effect that it can help conditions considered to be 'incurable'?

The breathing pattern has a direct effect on the physiology of the body.

If you don't believe me try breathing deeply and rapidly for a few minutes. (Don't try this if you suffer from asthma, heart disease or any other illness). You will soon start to feel unwell, with a headache, dizziness or even faintness. Reducing your breathing back down to gentle, quiet breaths will reverse these symptoms.

What you felt was due to an acute lack of oxygen to the brain, brought on by just a few very big breaths. Yes, increasing your breathing actually results in your body getting LESS oxygen! It is a myth that taking deeper breaths is good for you because it gives you more oxygen.

The reason that the idea that taking in more air provides more oxygen is wrong is that it is carbon dioxide that governs how much oxygen is available to your body. When you take in more air, you lose more carbon dioxide from your lungs. Your levels fall and that makes it more difficult for your cells to get oxygen from the blood and your body has to function on less oxygen.

In the exercise above, taking big breaths caused you to lose carbon dioxide which brought on a deficit of oxygen, particularly in the brain which is sensitive to low oxygen. This gave the symptoms of headache, dizziness or faintness. When you reduced your breathing the loss of carbon dioxide was reduced, allowing levels to increase and reversing the symptoms until they disappeared.

The body is highly dependent on, and sensitive to, carbon dioxide because it is such an important regulator for numerous physiological functionings, not just oxygen availability but also maintaining acid /alkaline balance, relaxation of smooth muscle (including blood vessels and airways) and proper functioning of the nervous system. As such low carbon dioxide levels can have a huge range of negative effects or symptoms.

Through over 50 years of research Professor Buteyko (Novosibirsk University, Russia) found that over breathing has damaging effects on the body, some of which (such as acid balance) have to be compensated for to avoid death. The compensation mechanisms themselves can be harmful (though preferable to death). These harmful effects may also manifest as symptoms in chronic ailments.

Fortunately, damage due to low carbon dioxide is reversible, so returning the breathing pattern to one that is optimal will eventually result in a return to good health in these aspects.

Feedback is always welcome so if you have any comments or queries please email me.

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breathe easy
Clare