



Horse Breather

Equine Breathing ezine November 08 issue 36



Post viral lethargy, irritability and overweight problems – a 6 month update

Following a virus 4 years previously, Natalie's lively and talented cob cross Trakhener youngster became over weight, obsessive about food, 'lazy' (lethargic), bad tempered and even aggressive at times. He was agitated and unable to focus on work and it became so bad despite her concerted efforts that Natalie gave up competitive dressage. But Natalie did not give up her search for a way to recover Jack and in June started Equine Breathing. She reported on the impressive early results in the July issue of 'Horse Breather' (33). This is how Jack and Natalie are doing after 6 months of Equine Breathing.

Natalie felt she had had two horses, the Jack of before his virus and the totally different Jack after it. She now feels she has the real Jack back.

"We began training and competing again in early July after a month of Equine Breathing. He has gone from strength to strength since then. He has been placed in every test with the best percentages he has ever had. He won two weeks ago with 67% in a big class and looked very happy and relaxed. He used to struggle doing two tests the same day but now he is up for the second as much as the first. After wearing his Breather between classes he comes out for his second test with the same energy he started with."

One of Jack's more distressing symptoms was that he was lethargic and reluctant to work or go for a hack. Natalie says she usually felt she should carry him and not vica versa. If she didn't get at him he would just stop. It was like riding with the hand brake on. "Now," says Natalie, "He has **enthusiasm** to move forward."

Previously in addition to the lack of energy, Jack was distracted by any excuse such as birds flying, the yard cat or a cow mooing in the distance. These would be good reasons for slowing or stopping and getting crabby. Now he will do school work for 35 – 40 minutes with no feeling of flagging or lack of concentration.

"I have increased the amount of school work I do with him and he is just **SO** much easier to ride... not argumentative at all now. He has this calm sort of demeanour about him. We have started doing some trot half pass work and doing 3-4 simple changes down the long side. He is forward and **LISTENING** !!!!

The level of difficulty of work he is now achieving is very exciting. He has always had good paces and a steady methodical way of learning, but moving on to new work was four steps forward, six back... he simply couldn't sustain it. He was just starting some affiliated Elementary dressage last year when I gave up. This week my trainer thinks the way he has improved over the last month or so there is no reason that he shouldn't be developing his medium level work very soon, in her words ... '**a different horse**'"



Jack has won or been placed in every competition in his 'come back'

Jack is no longer irritable or aggressive in the stable. Natalie would never have dreamt of going in his stable whilst he had hard feed, or a new filled hay net but now she can do his rug and skip out around him. "No more pulled faces or bottom swinging towards me when I go in with the tack. And whilst he is an 'in your face sort of personality' he has a kindness now which he hasn't had for years."

Before Equine Breathing Jack was always hungry; for grass, hay and hard feed. Now he wanders about the field just mooching, ie not on a mission to eat eat eat !! Natalie has been able to repeatedly cut down his hay and feed rations as he no longer has the desperate appetite.

Jack is now dramatically slimmer and has gone from a 32" dressage girth to a 26". Natalie reports, "He has completely lost the pads of fat that were behind the saddle area and burning off some of the cellulite he had laid down over his loins and quads' means he can use his back muscles more effectively and is more supple. This has meant he can move more easily and correctly in his work."

In the last few years Jack had always flinched when Natalie clipped the area over his ribs. This year she found that he hardly moved when she did that area

These days Jack "looks bright and perky and 'up' for what ever the day is bringing. He has even started to 'spook' a little out hacking... not something he has ever done before. I reckon he is just feeling good."

"Equine Breathing has had an outstanding effect on Jack. Physically he has more energy and his emotions too have changed. He is calmer from within... happier in himself, compliant when asked to do anything and less anxious. He looks relaxed in the field and spends more time socialising with the other horse."

"I know he likes having the Grazing Breather on. He will remove bandages and sheets by himself, and when tacking up will try and eat the bridle/ head collar as you try and get it on. But with the Grazing Breather he puts his head down and waits whilst the velcro fasteners are done up....say no more. Happy horse ? !

I would also like to mention the ease with which Jack accepted wearing the Breather from the start. He had it straight on for 4 hrs in a field and ever since it has stayed on no problem. He is still wearing it most days in the field. If it's a wet day he has it on in his stable whilst I do chores for 1/2 an hour here and there.

Natalie sums up, "I wouldn't want to contemplate life without the Grazing breather because I feel that without it Jack wouldn't have had a life to live that he could enjoy....

I am very happy for him."

For Natalie's report after a year go to '*Horse Breather*' issue 41, June 09. Do get in touch if you have any queries for Natalie
Till next time
breathe easy
Clare



"he is just SO much easier to ride"