



Horse Breather

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www.equinebreathing.com

“My horse’s breathing is fast / heavy” part 2 – the effect of warmth

This article follows on from Horse Breather issue 54 which explains the connection between adrenaline and breathing. Increasing one increases the other so stress, which causes an increase in adrenaline, results in increased breathing. At some point this results in symptoms.

Stress is when conditions are not optimal and the body has to take action to ameliorate the adverse conditions. Stress can be directly physiological, for example enforced inactivity; or emotional which then affects the physiology, for example weaning.

One form of stress is excessive warmth. Horses use breathing to cool down when they get hot. The air exhaled from the lungs contains water which is at body temperature and therefore removes heat from the body. In warm conditions the horse increases the volume of air breathed so that more warm water is exhaled and more heat is removed. The horse puffs which is similar to ‘panting’.

Many horses have symptoms that only occur during the warmer months of the year and the warmth is probably a factor along with other over breathing triggers (stress) such as pollen and photosensitivity.

If the weather is unseasonably warm in spring, autumn or winter, and the horse has its winter coat, the over breathing can be particularly noticeable as panting and breathing difficulties (breathing fast, loud, rapid, horse short of breath etc). Summer time symptoms such as sweet itch, hay fever or head shaking may recur; or may develop for the first time.

Oscar suffered from COPD and lethargy which was preventing his young owner from doing the jumping she wished to do. After one short session of Equine Breathing Jenny was delighted as Oscar’s energy was much improved. She started doing Equine Breathing regularly.

But a week later she told me that Oscar’s breathing had got worse. It turned out that Oscar had been clipped and therefore warmer rugs were put on him. But the weather was much warmer than normal and Oscar was having to increase his breathing to cool down. This increase in breathing was negating the work of the Equine Breather to reduce the breathing.

Rugs (covers) are always potentially a problem in terms of allowing the horse to maintain its own temperature regulation. Ideally, if you want your horse to benefit the most from Equine Breathing, it’s best to avoid rugs or covers if possible.

In hot climates or conditions where the horse is puffing (breathing hard and heavy) to cool down it is best to do Equine Breathing at times when the horse is cool, such as at night, under a fan, or when being hosed, so that it does not directly counter the body’s attempts to cool by increasing the breathing.



A horse that does Equine Breathing and has improved (reduced) breathing probably has advantages in terms of cooling itself because the increased carbon dioxide levels enable increased circulation. Increasing the blood flow in the skin increases the amount of heat that can be lost from the skin. This reduces the need for the panting which reduces the deterioration of the breathing pattern in warm conditions.

The idea that a horse with optimal breathing has improved heat loss from the skin when needed, is supported by the common report by owners that their horses sweat up less on exertion after they have started Equine Breathing. A feature whose significance will not be lost to sports/competition riders.

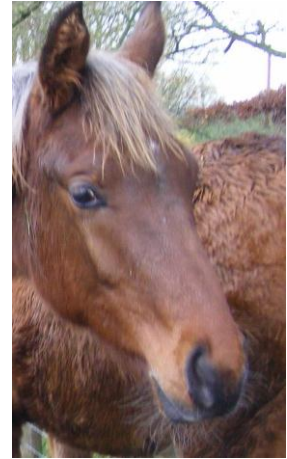


Horse with no 'recognised' breathing symptoms but nostril shape indicates over breathing

What to do if your horse's breathing is fast / heavy, (loud, deep, noisy, rapid etc)

Fortunately Equine Breathing is able to train the horse to reverse the over breathing.

Equine Breathing is easy to do. The Equine Breathing website has free instructions on how to do One nostril, or 1N so anyone can try it for themselves.



A more normal slit like nostril

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.