

Sound Check

Trainers look to alternative therapies to increase soundness and longevity in Thoroughbreds

Old school horsemen will tell you that all a Thoroughbred needs is hay, oats, and water. Other trainers may say all you need is a good veterinarian and a stopwatch. Right in the middle of these two extremes is a growing group of horsemen who are willing to think outside the box when it comes to finding therapies that help keep their horses sound or help heal injuries more effectively and, therefore, potentially lengthen a horse's racing career.

With an abundance of year-round rac-

ing, horses no longer receive a "winter break," which in the past had provided relief from the day-to-day pounding of training on a track and fully recover from body soreness brought about by regular training and racing. To compensate, trainers now employ veterinarians who specialize in chiropractic care, acupuncture, and massage therapy, and will often seek alternative training methods such as swimming. Other therapies horsemen now have available to them include ultrasound and hyperbaric chambers.

Swimming

There is no doubt that record-setting, Olympic gold medal-winning swimmer Michael Phelps is one of the best athletes in the United States. However, humans don't have to be Olympians to receive the benefits from swimming, which can include improved fitness levels and cardiovascular function. Thoroughbreds in training can also benefit from swimming in similar ways.

Last spring trainer Eric Reed knew he needed to do something different with his



The rigors of racing and training cause many trainers to seek new therapies to help their horses rebound from body soreness

top mare Rinterval because at age 6, she just wasn't responding to her regular training the way he would have liked. Fortunately, he already had a tried and true solution at his Mercury Training Center near Versailles, Ky.—a swimming pool. Reed added swimming to Rinterval's training regimen and credits it with making her more eager to train and for contributing to two top performances during the summer of 2010. In July she finished a head behind champion Informed Decision in the Chicago Handicap (gr. III) at Arlington Park and one race later almost pulled off another upset against champion Zenyatta in the Clement L. Hirsch (gr. I) at Del Mar.

"Swimming had two benefits for Rinterval in that it was a change from the everyday routine and it was better for her joints," said Reed. "Swimming is something we do a lot. It's great if you're training to build endurance, for horses coming off of layoffs, or if you are trying to freshen them up."

The benefits of swimming to the human cardiovascular system have long been known and it can be effective when used as physical therapy for people recovering from injury. When used as a conditioning tool, swimming can help increase lung capacity and endurance and help maintain fitness. As in the case of Rinterval, the change in the regular routine can also help



Swimming is a great addition to a training regimen because it builds endurance

return a horse's focus to training.

Swimming, when used for therapeutic purposes, improves blood circulation, strengthens joint muscles and ligaments, reduces arthritic complications, reduces scarring, and re-builds muscle after injury or atrophy. Swimming has proved to shorten recovery times for certain injuries and can help improve circulation to an injured area. Many consider the big-

gest benefit of swimming, regardless of the reason it is being used, to be that it minimizes the risk of injury and reduces the pounding on a horse's body that training on a track inflicts.

Owner/trainer Tom Scherder, who had a line of racehorses waiting to use the swimming facility at his Pegasus Equine Performance near Union, Ky., even before it opened, said he has lost many of his

With only 60% of our mares producing live foals...Is there anything we can do?

Body Builder™

The Answer For Problem Breeders (mares & stallions!)

The First, and Still the Best, for over 19 years!

There is something you can do to improve your odds for success.

2010 Live Foals Reported by Location

Location	Mares Bred	Live Foals	% Live Foals
California	3,163 (2)	1,891	60%
Florida	4,203 (8)	2,097	50%
Kentucky	19,140 (112)	12,931	68%
Louisiana	3552	1678	47%
New York	1,625	908	56%

Number of mares in parentheses were covered in the Northern Hemisphere on Southern Hemisphere time.

Copyright © By THE JOCKEY CLUB/BLOOD-HORSE PUBLICATIONS

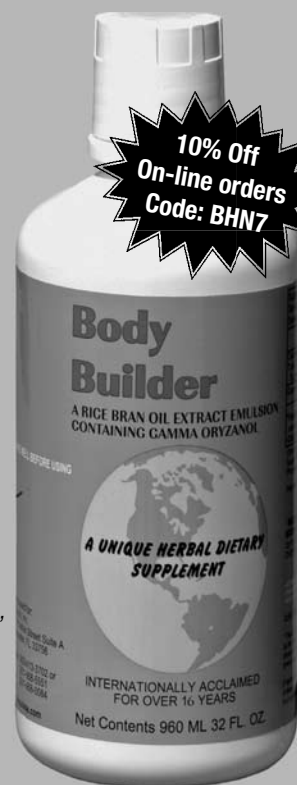
"We have been using **BodyBuilder™** for years with very good results. This year we have 162 babies. We had 30 maiden and barren problem broodmares last year which we put on **BodyBuilder™**. ALL 30 got in foal first cover!"
Brandywine Farm, KY Pam Robertson.

"I have had my studs on **BodyBuilder™** for several years now, and I can tell you that they are more relaxed, more interested and I had **more than 80% conception** rate. Especially if the mares are also on **BodyBuilder™**." M.P

"We had 7 problem mares that have not conceived for several years. We started them on **BodyBuilder™** and they are now all in foal". M.Macredmond DVM (Ireland)

What could just having one or more foals a year do for your bottom line? Would it be worth at least trying a proven product?

Decreased number of live foals hurts both stallion and broodmare owners. Don't let it drag your bottom line figures down!



EQUIADE PRODUCTS • (800) 413-3702 • (201) 568-5551 • www.equiade.com

Available in various catalogs and at your local tack shops and veterinarians Excellent for sales prep and conditioning for competition.



outside clients due to the downturn in the Kentucky Thoroughbred industry, but he continues to use swimming as the primary training method for his own horses.

“My horses rarely see a racetrack until race day,” said Scherder. “We’ve been very successful just going straight from the pool. And I know I’ve beaten far better horses at times because my horses weren’t sore. Sometimes it’s not always the best horse that wins; it’s the one that feels the best.

“A majority of the injuries that occur happen during morning training and with swimming, you greatly reduce the risk of injury,” added Scherder. “Horses that swim also last longer because their bodies are no longer taking a beating on the track. Swimming is easy on them, and they become more eager to cross-train. We’ve had horses come in that were back sore, hip sore, or had a bad knee and ankle, and they’ve all benefitted from swimming.”

Chiropractic and Acupuncture

Those who have visited a chiropractor and had their back “popped” back into alignment know how good this can feel and how quickly relief of sore necks, shoulders, and hips can occur. When applied to Thoroughbreds in training, especially when used in conjunction with acupuncture, chiropractic manipulation can be an effective therapy or preventative tool.

The principles of chiropractic and acupuncture go hand and hand because while one helps put a body back into alignment, the other can help pinpoint specific areas of soreness and can enhance or restore the natural flow of energy to the body.

Physical problems that chiropractic and acupuncture therapies can help treat include repetitive use injuries, abnormal weight bearing, misaligned joints, foreleg lameness, stiffness, and jaw and neck injuries. These therapies also can bring osteoarthritis relief. In addition to aiding in the relief of these symptoms, acupuncture can also be used to treat reproductive, respiratory, and gastrointestinal problems.

Dr. Ron Leick, a 1975 graduate of Ohio State University, points out misalignments in a horse’s spine and/or legs will cause the body to compensate, making lameness more likely to occur when this happens. Leick had a traditional veterinary practice for 25 years before moving toward a more holistic practice in 2001 as the effectiveness of chiropractic and acupuncture became more apparent to him. He has served as an examiner for the American Veterinary Chiropractic Association.

“I like to combine chiropractic and acupuncture because sometimes you won’t get enough response from just an adjustment,” said Leick. “Often a vicious cycle can start when you treat soreness, but it keeps coming back in the same spot. Acupuncture will break that cycle. It’s a great tool in diagnosing where a specific problem may lie.

“Chiropractic and acupuncture can’t account for conformational defects,” added Leick. “But they can prevent and eliminate arthritic changes. They work real nice as therapies and for preventing injuries before they can happen by keeping the body aligned properly.”

Leick said that length of time between



Acupuncture can prevent arthritic changes as a Thoroughbred ages

Do Your Horse’s Heels Look Like This?

Mysterious Lameness?

Tender heel?

Don’t wait for the “Black Goo” to show up. That’s already too late.



NO THRUSH®
A Natural product that Works!

Safe and Will Not Test!

Natural, Fast, Easy, Clean

SULCUS CRACK + SOFT HEEL = THRUSH

NO THRUSH®

The First Ever DRY Formula

Why use a Wet product on a Wet infection?

- *Attack thrush AND get rid of excessive moisture.
- *Use as treatment AND preventive. Apply in seconds!
- *Use on Scratches, rain rot, and coat fungus.

Available online at: www.NoThrushShop.com

Available in your local store soon! 805-813-6257 Four Oaks Farm Ventures. USA



treatments depends on the individual horse, with some requiring monthly adjustments while others can go three or four months.

In addition to swimming his horses, Reed will also often incorporate chiropractic therapies into their routines.

"I'm a big believer in this," said Reed. "Getting a horse adjusted can help sore muscles, and a chiropractor will often find aches and pains we didn't even know a horse had. As trainers, we're conditioned to watch the ankles and knees, and we sometimes forget about the muscles, joints, and ligaments. Popping a horse's spine into alignment, for example, can do wonders."

Massage Therapy

If horses could speak, the one therapy they may request most would be massage therapy. It has been commonplace for a long time to have a masseuse available for the jockeys in their quarters on race days. It's also not so unusual for this same masseuse to make barn visits and massage the horses before they race. One of the most famous horses of recent years to receive regular massages is Zenyatta. All the horses in trainer John Shirreffs' barn benefit because assistant trainer Michelle Jensen is also an equine masseuse.

Signs that a Thoroughbred might be able to benefit from massage therapy include head tossing, refusal to pick-up correct leads, unexplained lameness, difficulty with lateral movements, displays of aggressiveness when being saddled or mounted by a rider, and a lack of forward impulsion.

Massage therapy can relieve tension and muscle spasms and improve circulation that helps promote more rapid healing of injuries. It enhances muscle tone, increases a horse's range of motion, reduces inflammation and swelling in joints, which can help relieve pain, and lengthens connective tissue and helps prevent the formation of adhesions. It is often recommended that massage therapy be used in conjunction with chiropractic work because they both can help overworked muscles and dislocated joints.

Dr. Babette Gladstein, a licensed veterinarian in New York who specializes in alternative therapies, was a big proponent of massage therapy when she plied her trade at the New York racetracks.



Massage therapy can relieve tension and muscle spasms

QUILLIN

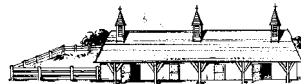
Leather & Tack

Track Halters	\$58.95
Black Track Halters	\$62.95
Race Track Shank	\$39.95
Black Track Shank	\$39.95

Our New Black Line Features Stainless Steel Hardware And Nickel Over Brass Name Plates.

Call Or Drop By Our Expanded Shop
Visit & Order OnLine At Quillin.com
Kentucky's Largest Custom Shop ... We Ship World Wide

1929 South Main Street • Paris, Kentucky • 40361
(800) 729-0592 • Fax (859) 987-0730 • www.Quillin.Com



GENUINE RUBBER for stalls, alleyways, trailers, grooming areas and wash racks
Deluxe "Soft Stall" Mats
make horse sense



Mats lay flat without curling and resisting shifting. Install over any surface. Sure-traction surface for natural footing. Cut bedding and disposal costs to 75%.
Made in USA.

IN-STOCK FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY:

10' x 10', 10' x 12', 12' x 12', 12' x 14' and 12' x 16'.

NO CHARGE for custom trimming.

NEW PRODUCTS! One source for your horse!

**- I-Block PAVERS - Perforated RING MATS
- ARENA RUBBER**



Linear Rubber Products, Inc.

Factory-Direct Pricing! Low Shipping Costs!

1-800-558-4040 www.rubbermats.com



She now focuses her attention on small animals and maintains the website www.animalacupuncture.net.

"I've been trained in chiropractic techniques, but if you're cracking or moving something, it can't be good," said Gladstein. "I've been successful using massage, along with infrared and lasers. Thoroughbreds are so fast because they are so tight. You can't even touch them. After some time with massage therapy, they really respond. I used to do a lot of work with trainer Carlos Martin, and he was a big believer in massage. Hall of Fame trainer Bobby Frankel was another who really

cared about his horses and was a proponent of using alternative therapies."

Methods to Promote Healing

When faced with the financial burden of caring for an injured racehorse, owners will often seek ways to speed healing. Two treatments that may not be readily thought of when looking at ways to get a horse back to the track faster include the use of a hyperbaric chamber and ultrasound.

Scherder, who also offers the use of a hyperbaric chamber at Pegasus Equine Performance, says he has seen it heal injuries incredibly fast and has had several cases in which horses that had been injured so severely they were on the verge of euthanasia made full recoveries after

hyperbaric chamber therapy, even making it back to racing.


"In my opinion, the hyperbaric chamber heals an injury 50-70% faster," said Scherder, who has been working with horses for "60 of my 66 years."

"It heals so fast, it's scary. We just had a vet send us a horse with a staph infection so severe it caused an open wound, and that horse was back to racing the next month. We've had horses come in that people felt sure they were goners, and one of those even went on to be a stakes winner. It won a Best of Ohio race," he said.

During hyperbaric chamber treatments, the oxygen content of air in the chamber is typically 95-100%, and oxygen delivery to the tissues increases from 20.0 to 26.7 mL of O₂ per 100mL of blood. It can be used to speed the healing of open wounds and fractures.

Hyperbaric chambers help accelerate the development of new blood vessels. Hyperbaric oxygen increases tissue levels of oxygen, allowing for fibroblasts and osteoclasts to function appropriately, which can aid in the treatment of slow-healing fractures. High oxygen concentrations may prevent the production of certain bacterial toxins and may kill certain anaerobic organisms. Increased oxygen delivery to the tissue with hyperbaric oxygen may prevent tissue damage by decreasing the tissue lactic acid level.

Ultrasound can be used as a preventative therapy but is more commonly used to promote healing. An ultrasound probe is used to send high-energy soundwaves into desired areas of the body. As the body's soft tissues absorb the waves, the waves are converted to heat. Ultrasound treats joint conditions and soft tissue injuries by decreasing swelling, promoting the healing of sores and surgical wounds, and reducing scar tissue around joints, which allows the joints to work more effectively. It also improves circulation, thereby increasing blood flow to muscles, ligaments, and tendons. A significant advantage of ultrasound as well as these other types of alternative therapies is that they offer drug-free alternatives to treating and preventing injury and can be used in place of common racetrack medications such as Bute, an anti-inflammatory medication.

"In my opinion, you don't need many common medications," said Gladstein. "I have no use for anti-inflammatory drugs in my practice unless it is being used as a last resort to relieve pain that hasn't responded to other treatments. Regenerative medicine such as ultrasound, massage, and lasers is the wave of the future for humans as well as for horses. Some people are of the mind that these are all discretionary therapies when in actuality they should be primary therapies." 



Hyperbaric chambers help accelerate the development of new blood vessels

Dandy Products, Inc. Padding & Flooring Specialists



"Padding At Its Best"

Breeding Sheds, Stocks, Stalls, Trailers, Exercise & Training Areas,
Induction & Recovery Rooms Table & Surgical Pads, Neo-Natal Foal Beds

Non-Slip Safety Floors for All Areas

Pavesafe Bricks & Tiles, Trac-Roll & Vet-Trac Floors, Wash Stall, Grooming, Aisleway and Trailer Mats

Toll-Free 888-883-8386 • 513-625-3000 • FAX 513-625-2600
3314 State Route 131, Goshen, Ohio 45122 • www.dandyproducts.net