

PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR HORSES: PRESENTED BY THE PEPPERELL HORSE OWNERS ASSOCIATION

by Judy Lorimer

Most of us think of Physical Therapy (PT) in terms of humans who are recovering from injuries or illnesses. However, our equine friends are often candidates for various treatments to aid recoveries as well, and can benefit from the similar approaches used for humans. Equine physical therapy is a growing field, providing noninvasive treatments to promote healing, decrease pain and return to function.

The typical riding horse weighs from 900 - 1400 pounds, depending on breed and body type, and these pounds are carried on legs that are thinner than those of the average human. Consequently injuries to the skeleton, spinal and other muscles, and other tissues (hooves, tendons and ligaments) can be life or career threatening, and at the least often require long layups, as they can take months to heal. Equine PT can provide treatments to speed up



recovery and minimize down time, to achieve a faster return to your horse's prior performance level.

On Thursday, February 10th, at 7:30 P.M., **Jennifer Brooks**, PT, MEd., a certified equine physical therapist, will present a program for the Pepperell Horse Owners Association (PHOA) at the Pepperell Community Center, located at the Route 113 rotary in Pepperell. Using visual aids and case histories, she will discuss common injuries and conditions, and treatments that can speed recovery time and return the horse to usefulness much more quickly.

There are new cutting edge technologies (iontophoresis, phonophoresis, lymphodema treatments, stifle protocol, and core strengthening) ,unavailable just a few years ago, that can now be utilized with great success, for the backyard horse as well as the elite race horse, dressage, combined training, hunter/jumper, endurance, and show horse. Acupuncture, chiropractic and massage is often used as well, and can be combined with other therapies. Jennifer has her own clinic, Equine Rehabilitation Services LLC, in Brookline, New Hampshire. She would welcome questions in advance: if you or someone you know has a horse with a particular problem that you would like to see addressed, she can be contacted prior to the meeting at jenequinept@charter.net. For more information about equine P.T., check her website at www.equinerehabservices.com.

The Pepperell Horse Owners Association, which has the motto ***"Working to preserve and encourage equine activities in the Town of Pepperell"***, is offering this fascinating program free of charge to the public, as well as to its members. Refreshments will be available at the meeting. For more information about PHOA, visit the website at www.phoa.info. Membership is open to anyone in the region with an interest in horses, recreational trails, open space, and/or agriculture.