



AB Physiotherapy Services 4 horses and riders

Newsletter no4.

February 2021

First up my big news for 2021 is that I'm starting a PhD in March. I'll be looking at developing outcome measures for equine physiotherapy (how we can better assess and score if your horse is improving or worsening). So, for the next 3 years I'll be studying full time online through Charles Sturt University, with the occasional trip to the Wagga Wagga campus where their equine and veterinary school is based. This is an opportunity for me to work with experts I admire and potentially help horses all around the world, not just locally.

I'm still available to see your horse/s and support the horse-rider partnership. I'm currently working on a few new Physio4riders services.

Jessie is making progress with her proper arena site marked out, and acquiring a sea container for new tack shed, although Joe temporarily halted things by rolling on the sand pad! Remember to check out her posts/videos as ambassador for [Food You Can Trust](#) helping educate us all.

I don't know how Morgan is still finding time to do all the slow and steady training with Max she is now that she has added puppy training to her list of jobs with Clifford joining the team—such a cute fluff ball! With the arrival of their new jumping saddle, Max and Morgan are also starting to find their wings.

Best Wishes from, your local qualified professional in Veterinary Physiotherapy.



But first a cartoon ...

Fergus BY JEAN ABERNETHY

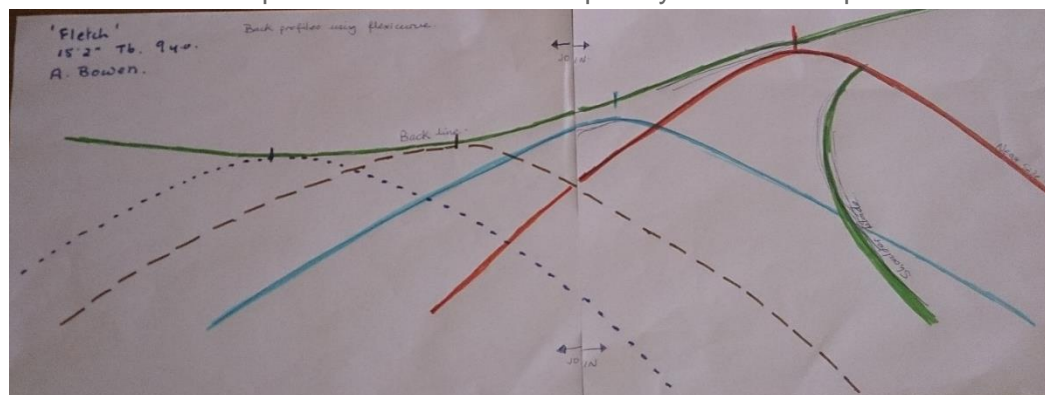


Back Pain

Pain changes Behaviour. The better you know your horse and their normal behaviour the sooner you can pick up when there is a change. Back pain is common in horses as despite what we'd sometimes like to think, horses did not evolve to carry humans around. This 3 part blog series describes some signs to help you [recognise back pain in horses](#).



And this more recent blog about assessing [body condition and muscle development](#) outlines how to take a back profile to monitor the shape of your horses topline.



4X Review Package

To maintain your horse in tip top condition it is useful to have a regular review or musculoskeletal screening. The 4X review package allows you to book and pay up front for 4

Physiotherapy appointments for your horse, to be scheduled quarterly. Findings are compared at each seasonal review allowing early detection and treatment of any issues. Appointments will be scheduled, but with the flexibility to change and use them anytime you like, eg. If your horse sustains an injury before the next review. You will be sent a reminder 2 weeks before the scheduled review so the day/time can be adjusted as needed. The 4X Review Package is suitable for:

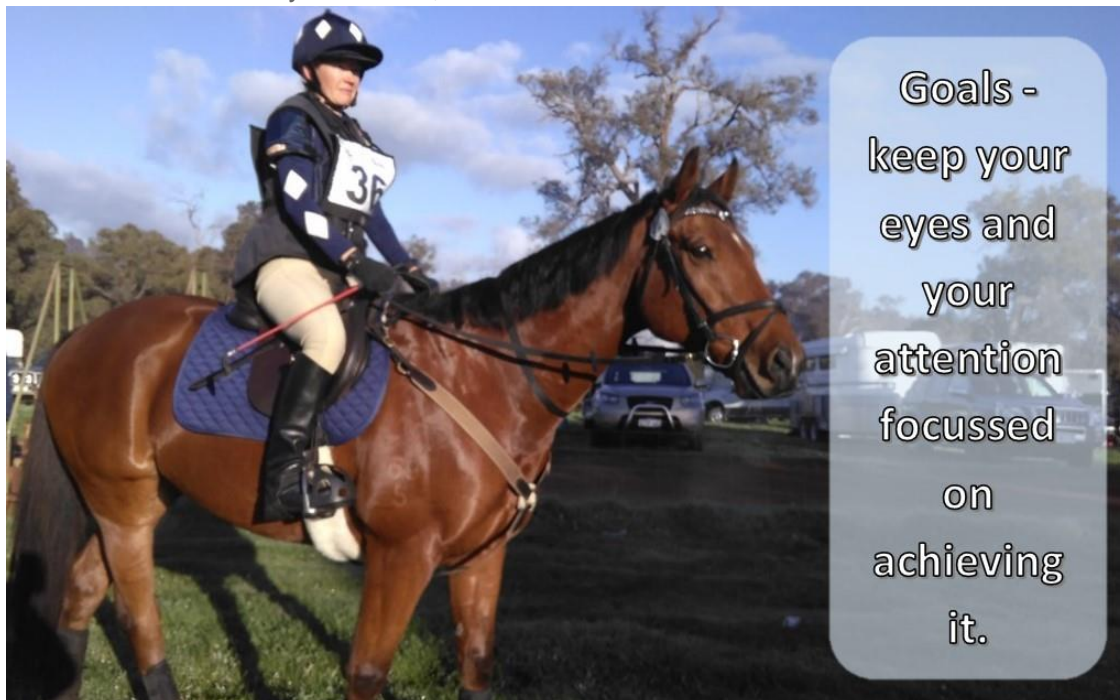
- performance horses to help pick up little changes/ niggles before injury occurs and helps you to know your training is progressing on the right track.
- young horses starting out their training.
- horses with saddle fit issues to track their change in shape over the year.
- stoic children's ponies, when the rider isn't experienced enough to pick up if something isn't quite right (remember pain changes behaviour, so don't wait until your pony starts biting or refusing to jump, book the 4X Review Package so you can set and forget.)
- older horses on spell or in light work to monitor joint stiffness and comfort levels.

4X Review Package: \$300.00 (save \$50.00)

N.B. weekend/afterhours surcharge and travel fee will still need to be paid on the day.

2021 Goals.

Our attention is one of our most powerful resources, make sure it is on something useful. We also tend to be visually dominant, so what we look at takes our attention for better or worse.



Goals -
keep your
eyes and
your
attention
focussed
on
achieving
it.

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Newsletter Bonus

Foot awareness. No, I'm not talking about getting them out of the way of your horses' hooves in time, although that is a very useful skill to possess. The foot is where our body interacts with the

ground. External forces stimulate receptors in our feet that effect how we use our ankles, knees, hips, back, neck, our whole body really. Having good balance and foot awareness is important when riding as only a small part of the foot is in contact with the stirrup iron.

Exercise (try barefoot and in your riding boots) slowly, double slowly, triple slowly lean forward so your weight shifts forward towards your toes as far as you can without your heel lifting up. Then slowly lean backwards so your weight shifts towards your heels as far as you can without your toes lifting up. Really slowly rock forwards and backwards feeling every little bone and muscle in your feet. Try it in time with your breathing. Think of Tai Chi, the benefit of this exercise is in going really slowly.

Then come back to the middle and go side to side really slowly. Feel where your weight goes easily, where it doesn't want to go, how far you can go without losing your balance, how the rest of your body responds and reacts to the information coming from your feet. Return to the middle and slowly turn to look over your shoulder so you are rotating, notice which parts of your feet, ankles, legs and trunk follow the movement. Think about what your horse might feel if you turn your head when riding. Could this be all you have to think of doing to give a really light turn aid.

Stirrup irons. Some people claim a particular type of stirrup iron helps decrease their knee pain, or stops their toes going numb etc. Currently there isn't enough research to say if one stirrup iron is better than another. From a physics point of view stirrup irons with a flexible side may provide some cushioning when you are riding walk, sitting trot or canter in full seat. However, they will be more unstable when your bottom is out of the saddle such as rising trot, jumping, cantering in 2-point position; instability makes your muscles work harder – like standing on a wobble cushion.

Generally, a straight line down the middle of your foot should be at 90degrees to the stirrup iron and the ball of the foot should be on the stirrup iron. This allows the ankle to spring up and down, not be locked in a heels down position. Rotation should come from the hips not the lower leg or foot, so if your foot always turns out it might have more to do with matching the width of your horse, and the width of the saddle, to the width and size of your pelvis, so that your hips can rotate. Other factors like the length of the seat, position of the knee rolls/blocks, position of the stirrup bars and stirrup leather length all affect your position. A balanced rider is easier for the horse to carry as the load is distributed over a larger area in a predictable way. Regularly practicing body awareness exercises can help improve your balance.

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