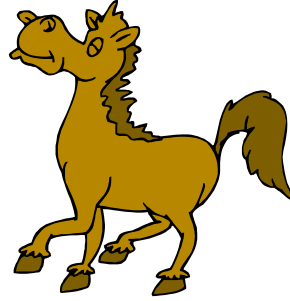


BODYWORKS BY SUE



Everyone knows how it feels to have muscle and joint pain. You're stiff. You walk funny. You get tense. You can't focus. You lash out at your friends. To get some relief, you head to a chiropractor or a masseuse.

What would you do in that situation, though, if you were a horse? Well, if you're lucky enough to be part of the HH herd, you get a visit from Sue Davis, a certified equine sports massage therapist.

Sue has been an equine massage therapist and practitioner for the past 16 years. She travels throughout the country, applying her skills to Grand Prix and Olympic horses and show, trail and therapy horses. "Horses are athletes," Sue explains, "and, no matter what their calling, I approach their physical problems as one would those of a professional human athlete." She searches for the cause of muscle spasms and tightness, using massage techniques to release stress, inflammation and improve range of motion. "Obviously, how they feel physically plays a big part in their attitude and performance," Sue says.

Sue begins her treatments by using a cold laser to help identify areas of discomfort and misalignment. Then she deeply massages muscles to loosen the muscle structure itself. "Once you get those muscles relaxed," Sue explains, "bones tend to go right back into place." She follows up by using various nutritional and naturopathic supplements to promote healing.

At her third session with HH horses this month, Sue worked with Misty, Gabby, Charlotte, Andy, Slick and Annie. As Sue applied her skills, each horse became visibly more relaxed. Their heads began to drop, their eyes closed, and they let out an audible sigh of relief.

Although in this country equine massage is a relatively new phenomenon, its use dates back thousands of years. Ancient Greeks massaged their horses to get optimum performance before riding them into battle. In the 1980s, Sue became interested in equine massage when she was introduced to an elderly German gentleman in the northeastern U.S. who was an expert. Her interest was piqued, so she read extensively, took classes and became certified. She later received certification in Canada as well.

Sue points out that equine massage therapy is not a substitute for veterinary care, but is used in conjunction with it. In fact, most of her clients are referred to her by vets. Sue also teaches an equine massage class at Scottsdale Community College, has authored two books, and is currently building a practitioners' program through the Arizona Veterinary Association.

We are tremendously fortunate to have Sue as a member of our diagnostic team. Ordinarily, skilled therapists like Sue are seen only at barns where there are high performance horses. Our horses are even luckier because Sue teaches her SCC class here at HH. That means that all our horses get regular treatments during the semester. In volunteering her services, Sue helps us ensure that each of our horses is comfortable and happy and can perform at their best. After all, therapy is not just for our riders. The well being of both horse and rider are of utmost importance here at HH.

