

## **Equine Myofascial Release**

Years ago, a friend of mine called me who owned a two-year-old horse that had wonderful conformation, with great potential. Every time they would run this horse, it would go lame within one hundred yards or so. He paid \$19,000 for this horse. One day after the purchase of this horse, he called me and was very upset about this horse's performance. It wasn't doing well. He had taken it to New Bolton Center, which is one of the leading veterinary centers in the world, based out of the University of Pennsylvania. The vets had done everything they possibly could, and eventually told him, "there is nothing else we can do for this horse. If you keep running him, he is going to be destroyed. The only thing you can do is put him out to pasture."

So certainly this was a huge financial problem for my friend. He loves animals and really cared about this animal, so he called me and told me the situation and asked me to treat his horse. I told him I didn't know anything about horses, but he kept after me. And I kept telling him I didn't know anything about horses! He was very persistent and eventually he said, "Listen John, do you know you're a healer?" I said yes, and he added, "But I mean for animals too." I knew I was sunk, so I said okay, and made arrangements for him to pick me up the next morning. After I got off the phone, I quieted down and asked myself, what was

this horse's problem? I got a picture of the left forequarter of a horse with a big red swirl on the left shoulder and another one down near the hock.

On the way to the stable the next morning I asked where the horse's problem was and my friend said, "The left forequarter." Interesting, I thought. We took a couple other people up with us, and when we got to the stable they brought this magnificent animal out. Now here I am looking at this horse, and this horse is looking at me, and I'm thinking, now what do I do? So I thought, well, I know something about the energy system of a human being, maybe I ought to check this horse's energy first. So, in those days, the only thing I really knew about horses was that the front end bit and the back end kicked and did other things. So, I made a big sweep around the ends. I started to feel the energy on the right side and eventually got around to the left forequarter. Sure enough, right where I had seen the red swirl, I felt a tremendous amount of heat pouring out of him. I also felt a lot of heat on an area called the hock, which is just above the hoof. I then started to check the tissue texture and I felt all this hard, gristly buildup in those hot areas. I was very similar to what I felt with human beings, but a much bigger version of it. The trainer was holding the horse by the bit, so I started doing some elbow work and some strumming-type techniques on the horse. We had somebody on the other side of the horse to help stabilize and to be sure the horse wouldn't move away. I eventually decided I would do a crossed-hands

release over the shoulder area. As I was quieting myself and leaning into the horse, I heard myself say, you don't know what the hell you are doing! And my intuitive voice said, "Shut up!" So, I quieted down again and the instant I did, the most amazing thing happened. My awareness fell into this horse and I "got" instantaneously where the horse's problem was. The moment I quieted down, everybody that was watching said, "He's leaning into you." We had made a connection!

The release was very similar to a human's also, except again a much bigger version. This is why it's helpful to learn on horses, because the release is so big you really can translate it easily back to a human experience. I then decided to do an energy technique. The trainer was holding the horse by the bit; I had somebody put their hands between the ears over the parietals, somebody else above the hoof, and I put my hands over the shoulder area and upper back. I closed my eyes and started to quiet down again. I started to feel this motion. I was thinking to myself, gee, that feels familiar, and all of a sudden it hit me. Oh my God, *this horse is unwinding!* Here I have twelve hundred pounds of horse coming at me, coming at me, coming at me, and I'm thinking, now what do I do? Then I hear the trainer saying, "He's falling asleep." The horse's eyes closed, his ears went down, his head started to rear back, and his left forequarter went into hyperextension. Zap! He hit the position of injury in space, the still point, and at

that moment his eyes opened and became bright, his ears straightened up, and we all felt a lightening bolt of energy go through his body. At the same time his hoof thumped into the ground loudly and he just about threw us all off this body. I had never felt such a powerful experience! It was unbelievable!

After we finished, I asked the trainer if he would take him out and run him again. He took him out and the horse ran a mile for the first time in his life! The owner told me that when he went back to the stable a couple of days later, the trainer came running out of the stable exclaiming, "Who was that guy? I've been a trainer for thirty-five years and I have never seen a horse turn around like this in my life. He just ran three miles, and in good time!" With only three months of training, he broke and shattered the record at Belmont Stakes Park, which is one of the most important racetracks in the New York area. Within six months from the time of purchase, this horse had won over \$600,000!

It has been my consistent experience with horses that they make significant improvements, returning to racing and shattering records. They love treatment! They lean into it, many times using you as a fulcrum to correct themselves. Once you've treated a horse they'll come running to you, as soon as they see you, as will other animals. Every time that I have ever unwound a human being and there has been an animal in the room, like a dog or a cat, they will get up

instantaneously and move right into the energy field and participate. Dogs unwind, cats unwind, and I have even treated birds successfully.

Sincerely,

John F. Barnes, PT