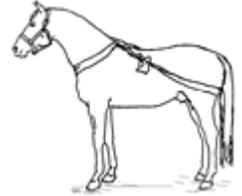


The Body Wrap

by Linda Tellington-Jones

A reprint from **TTEAM UP With Your Horse**

The Body Wrap is a TTEAM tool for influencing a horse's behavior, increasing awareness and improving his performance. The Body Wrap is composed of two elastic bandages (for instance, Ace or Tensor) secured together. It is tied in a figure eight around the horse. Slight variations in the placement elicit different responses (see accompanying illustrations). The wrap maintains a constant connection with the body because it moves with the horse. This is particularly significant for horses with neurologic deficits because this continual sensory input encourages the rebuilding of the neural pathways.



Most horses also accept the Body Wrap with little preparation. Here are some considerations to keep in mind when putting a Body Rope or wrap on your horse for the first time.

Before tying the wrap back to itself, start by holding the end of the wrap while you are standing just behind the horse's shoulder. Have a helper lead the horse forward a few steps and stop. Repeat. If the horse seems comfortable and accepting of the wrap go ahead and tie it.

If the horse has very tight hindquarters or tail, start by holding the wrap over the horse's tail and repeat the walk-halt exercise before taking the wrap under the tail.

If you are alone and your horse is comfortable about having his tail and hindquarters handled, you may be able to put the Body Wrap on by yourself in a large stall or contained area.

It is very interesting to notice the subtle and dramatic changes that occur with the Body Wrap. For instance, a strung-out horse or one who is camped under suddenly takes on a more balanced stance, having "a leg at each corner." Or a horse's topline may change so that he looks "rounder." Or you may see more movement and engagement in the hindquarters.

Another TTEAM tool for riding is a Promise Rope/Wrap that fits snugly around a horse's hindquarters. I use the word "promise" to describe this tool because it "promises" engagement. I've found that horses considered "lazy" behind generally get more impulsion with a Promise Rope. In contrast, nervous horses usually do better with the elastic Promise Wrap.

You can incorporate the Body Rope and Body Wrap into your training sessions whether you're working from the ground or from the saddle. During ground work, the wrap can reassure horses who rush or are hesitant to go through doors or narrow spaces. These tools also encourage horses who freeze or are stiff when being led. Worn during a longeing session, a Body Wrap helps engage the horse's hind end and elevate his withers without jamming or restricting his neck. Horses who act up on the longe line often settle when wearing the Body Wrap.

There are benefits to riding while your horse is wearing a Body Wrap. Prepare him by putting the wrap in place, then add the saddle. From the ground, lead him in a circle at the walk and then the trot. In just a few strides, you'll be able to tell if he is comfortable or if he needs more time to become accustomed to the sensation.

The first time you climb aboard you may want to enlist the aid of an assistant. In my experience, riding with a Body Wrap benefits horses

- Who swish their tails, drag their toes and are stiff through the body.
- Who shy -- particularly at a specific place in the ring or arena.
- Who are afraid of things behind them.
- Who are not using their hindquarters. It gives them a greater awareness of the connection between their front and back ends and prevents them from becoming strung out.
- Who are overly sensitive to your leg aids or who seem insensitive or unresponsive to them.
- Who were injured and now may have an uneven stride behind.

However you incorporate the Body Wrap into your horse's training, I recommend using it as you would other tools depending on your horse's response. If you see a difference, use it for five to 10 sessions and then from time to time as needed or when teaching new exercises.

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