



Healing Options

Emma Carville

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Equine therapy and different healing options are vital in the show jumping community. While more often than not different healing options are used as maintenance or to prevent injury, different forms of options are used to treat lameness's or other ailments.

When we are sick, we go to the doctor, when we are sore we go to get chiropractic care, when we need a massage we see a massage therapist; same goes for horses. Equine care is important when we take into account all of the jumping and hard work horses do during show season.

Massage therapy for horses is something that Tina Watkins has been doing for 19 years. "Its not really a job when you wake up excited to go to work everyday," She says.

Massage therapy is very beneficial to equine care, Tina says, "My favourite thing is to take a sound horse and be able to make it jump that much taller, or run that much faster."

There is constantly new information and new technologies that become readily available. "I'm a real seeker of knowledge," she says.

Always wanting to learn new things, Tina also shadows other vets in the US to keep up with new techniques and technologies.

Being a massage therapist you are constantly working as part of a team, wither it is with trainers, owners, or even other health care professionals.

"I'm a 100% believer in the team system. I don't believe that one person has the answer," Tina says. Adding that, "In Alberta, we largely work in a team."



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Another important healthcare professional is Chad Hewlett a veterinarian with over 20 years experience in equine healthcare.

Chad has been around horses since he was young, saying, "I've always been a farm kid."

Most of the focus for Chad on a daily basis, "is looking after horses, competing horses, and staying ahead of injury's," adding that they do a lot of "maintenance work."

Working as a team is a vital importance for Chad and his team as well, working with clients, trainers, and riders to ensure the horses remain sound.

"We do some pre-buy stuff, and make sure they are ready for the shows," says Chad. Going on to say that he is "very much a treatment vet."

With many new technologies on the market to help with diagnosis Chad says that there are many new advantages for vets making it more efficient to treat the horses, and is impressed by how far technology has come. MRI machines, 3D ultra sounds and CT scans that are able to create an image in 90 seconds will be huge advantages in the medical field.

Roger Lewis is an equine chiropractor, and has been for over 30 years. Roger says that the inspiration for being a chiropractor started when he was younger through his own chiropractor.

"I like to think it helps a lot," says Roger. "I think that Show jumping has to be the most challenging and rewarding, what I do, I think makes big differences to the horses."

Working in part of a team is just a normal day for Roger, "I believe in keeping a horse balanced." I like to think that we all work as a team; it's the masseuses, farriers, trainers, owners, vets, everyone."

Nathan is one of many farriers in Alberta and says "I find it helpful to receive accurate prognosis from other professionals that have a close relationship with the animal so as our work can compliment each others and the animals performance and/or soundness level can be enhanced."

One of the most rewarding things for Roger he says is, "even in the last five years, as the diagnostic technologies keep getting better, being able to visit with a vet about a bone scan or an MRI. And to see the pictures of the things I have been feeling all of these years is pretty cool for me."

"Show jumping is demanding on horses, and so if they are going hard and jumping lots then they might need more maintenance."

"Some of the smallest changes can make the biggest difference." Says Roger.