



Equine Body Working Session General Information

Before The Session

Irrespective of the type of body work, you should always check before the session that your vet is happy for the work to be done. This is generally only a formality but your vet will be aware of any reasons why the work would be inappropriate. The Masterson Method is not as well known as other types of body work and a full explanation can be found at www.mastersonmethod.com. The methods are very gentle, non invasive and do not involve strong manipulations. I am a fully insured and Certified Masterson Method Practitioner and am happy to answer any questions your vet may have.

Before The Session Begins

The Masterson Method is about increasing your horse's range of movement *in a relaxed state*. Before a session you may be asked a few questions to get a picture of your horse's general health. Typically you may be asked for a little history about your horse, brief details of any long term and current issues and the dates when your horse was last shod or seen by the dentist. These last questions simply give clues to the way your horse may be feeling. Horses shod within a few days of the session may be feeling the effects of minor concussion. If your horse has seen the dentist leading up to the session, the mouth may be a little tender. If the dentist hasn't been seen for a while there may be some discomfort from teeth with sharp edges. It's all about building up a picture of the way your horse may be feeling.

About The Session

Although your horse's history is important, body work is all about working with the horse that's in front of you *on the day*. The Masterson Method works as a *conversation* between your horse and the practitioner, using the horse's subtle body language to identify areas of discomfort and tension, bringing attention to and relaxing the muscles involved. The methods work best when the horse and practitioner each have the close attention of the other and can 'listen' and respond. Preferably your horse shouldn't work immediately before a session. The work is best carried when the muscles are cold. Hay nets provide an easy source of distraction and should be removed. If the session takes place in a stable, most of the work may be done with the horse at liberty, in a loose head collar but untied and allowed to move around. If you are asked to hold your horse the ideal situation is to stay as still as possible. The more you interact with your horse the less your horse focuses on the conversation with the practitioner. Although there are no invasive moves or strong manipulations, your horse is important to you and you should always speak up if you see something that worries you or you don't like.

During The Session

Masterson sessions are about working *with* your horse rather than *on* your horse and the pace is dictated by your horse's responses. Sessions can last around 2 hours - it all depends what your horse needs and it's sensory system can comfortably take. Your horse will tell you when the session needs to stop. Everything is driven by your horse's body language, the practitioner's responses and your horse's reactions. If you are familiar with natural horsemanship you'll probably be aware of some of the signs. Blinking, closing eyes, licking and chewing, sighing and yawning may all be pointers to areas of discomfort or releases of tension, but there are other more subtle indicators (for example, lip movements, dilated nostrils, changes in breathing patterns, weight shifts, muscle twitches, head shaking). Obviously horses do all of these things all of the time but what we are looking for is repeatable reactions in response to the practitioner's actions. As the session progresses your horse should begin to release tension and become quieter and more relaxed. Masterson Practitioners do not diagnose but may make observations and suggest you talk with an expert. This might be your vet, farrier, saddler for example. Our job is to make your horse as comfortable as possible. The object is not to 'fix' things, but to let go of muscle tension. This may be all it needs to resolve an issue or improve performance, but there are no specific goals or expectations.

After The Session

The Masterson Method is very interactive and you may see lots of releases during the session as the tension disappears and your horse processes the neurological and muscular changes. Don't worry if your horse seems sleepy or is having a 'zen' moment. This is all completely normal. If possible, turn your horse out after the session to wander around in the field and make sense of the changes to its body. Usually you can start gentle exercise the next day, increasing the work when your horse 'feels right'. It can take up to 72 hours for your horse to get used to the changes and rebalance itself. Listen to your horse and go with your instincts. Hopefully you'll find that your horse is moving more freely, has a better stride and has a new energy - but remember, it may take a little time for your horse to rebalance itself so takes things carefully. Because of this processing and rebalancing, we would not recommend a full session takes place within the 3 days leading up to a competition. Anxious or fidgety horses often show marked positive changes to their behaviour. Don't expect 'miracle cures'. Each horse is different and some respond more quickly than others. What we hope for is to see some improvement in the way your horse moves or behaves. With tensions that have built up over a long time, the process can be like peeling away the layers of an onion and several sessions may be necessary to get the best improvement we can. Horses are often good at not complaining and, when they have an issue, compensate by using other muscles to take the load. In rare situations your horse may seem worse after a session than before. Invariably this happens where the muscles used to compensate are relaxed and the underlying issue becomes apparent. This is no bad thing as it allows you to identify and resolve the root problems that your horse has been disguising until now. But, as I say, this is quite a rare situation. People often ask if more sessions are needed. I prefer to let the results speak for themselves. You will know if you see a change in your horse, if you feel there has been a benefit to your horse and more sessions would be beneficial. The first session is not usually as good as subsequent sessions as your horse initially does not know what to expect. Regular preventative maintenance is better than trying to resolve repetitive problems. Post session feedback (good, bad or indifferent) is really helpful, so please let me know how your horse is going.



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Consent For A Body Work Session

Please complete the statement below. Email it to info@thequiethorse.net or detach it and return it to Bern Easterford at Lowes Farm, Grindon, Staffordshire ST13 7TT prior to the initial session.

Statement

I understand that my vet is required to give consent before any equine body work takes place. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to obtain this consent and that any body work sessions which are requested are performed on the understanding that I have sought and obtained this consent

Signature.....

Date.....

Name.....

(please print)

Phone.....

Email.....

Horse's Address.....

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Post Code