



Equine First Aid Instructions and Bandaging for Leg Injuries

Wound Care

*****All wounds justify administering a tetanus booster and may also require antibiotics and/or anti-inflammatory depending on severity. Some otherwise seemingly simple lacerations are critical emergencies due to the location near critical structures such as a joint or tendon sheath. These injuries require immediate Veterinary attention to ensure these structures do not become infected. If you are ever in question about the severity of a wound, please contact a Veterinarian.*****

1. Wearing gloves clean the area around the wound. Remove debris if necessary.
2. Use betadine or chlorhexidine scrub to clean the wound and the surrounding area.
3. Rinse with water or a diluted betadine solution (mix a couple of drops with ~2 cups water until the mixture is a light tea color).
4. Clip the area around the wound.
5. Repeat the scrubbing procedure and rinse with the dilute betadine solution.
6. Dry the area (using a lint-free towel if possible or just dry the skin around the wound), apply antibacterial ointment, place the telfa pad over the wound followed by a leg bandage.
7. Wrap with brown gauze then overlay with vetrap.

Applying Leg Wraps:

1. Begin with the end of the wrap on the inside of the horse's leg.
2. When wrapping the horse's left legs you will wrap in the counter-clockwise direction. When wrapping the horse's right legs you will wrap in the clockwise direction. The wrap must pass over the cannon bone (front of the leg) first, before wrapping around the flexor tendons (back of the leg) in order to prevent bandage bows.
3. Start the wrap below the knee (at the top of the cannon bone), proceed down to the fetlock joint (bottom of the cannon bone), and then wrap upwards until you have reached the top of the cannon where you should run out of wrap.



Applying a Sweat Bandage:

Sweats are used to reduce swelling and fluid build-up when horses have sprains, strains, cuts, and edema or when directed by a veterinarian.

You will need:

- sweating compound (magna paste, epsom salt poultice, bute-cort sweat, dms0/furazone based, performance osmotic sweat, etc.)
 - plastic wrap (saran wrap)
 - sheet cotton or stable wraps or cotton quilts or no-bow bandages
 - track bandages or flannels or polo wraps
1. Apply the sweating preparation to the entire area to be bandaged in a layer with uniform thickness.
 2. Wrap the leg in plastic wrap (following guidelines outlined above for applying leg wraps). Avoid applying the plastic wrap too tightly. It should naturally stick to the sweating compound and have excessive wrinkles in the plastic wrap.
 3. Wrap the leg in the sheet cotton or stable wrap following the above guidelines for applying leg wraps.
 4. Wrap the leg with track bandage following the above guidelines for applying leg wraps. Many track bandages are elastic so be sure that the wrap is not too tight. You should be able to slide your finger in between the horse's leg and the wrap when finished. Be sure to leave approximately ½ inch of exposed sheet cotton/stable wrap at the bottom and top of the track wrap.
 5. If you wrap one leg on a horse, you must wrap the opposite leg as well for support. If you are only medicating one leg then the other wrap is simply a "dry wrap" or non-medicated wrap. Both bandages should be identical with the omission of the medication if so desired. Exception is when you are sweating or poulticing both front legs and/or both hind legs. If this is the case then both bandages are medicated.

***Do not leave a sweat for more than 12 hours unless directed by a veterinarian. Check the wrap periodically to ensure that it has not tightened or loosened too much.



Applying a Poultice Bandage:

Poultices are used to reduce swelling, decrease inflammation, change the temperature in a leg, and among other reasons remove edema.

You will need:

- poultice
- paper (newspaper or any other paper)
- Optional: sheet cotton or stable wraps or cotton quilts or no-bows
- Optional: track bandages or flannels or polo wraps

1. Apply the poultice to the entire area to be bandaged in a layer with uniform thickness.
2. Wet the paper and apply over the poultice.

You can either stop after this step- or continue with the steps below.

3. Wrap the leg in the sheet cotton or stable wrap (following the above guidelines for applying leg wraps).
4. Wrap the leg with track bandage. Many track bandages are elastic so be sure that the wrap is not too tight. You should be able to slide your finger in between the horse's leg and the wrap when finished. Be sure to leave approximately ½ inch of exposed sheet cotton/stable wrap at the bottom and top of the track wrap.
5. If you wrap one leg on a horse, you must wrap the opposite leg as well for support. If you are only medicating one leg then the other wrap is simply a "dry wrap" or non-medicated wrap. Both bandages should be identical with the omission of the medication if so desired. Exception is when you are sweating or poulticing both front legs and/or both hind legs. If this is the case then both bandages are medicated.