

TTEAM and Colic

By Carol Lang

If you think your horse is experiencing colic, take his temperature, pulse and respiration; listen for gut sounds; and check the colour of his gums and capillary refill time. Determining your horse's vital signs before calling your veterinarian helps him to evaluate the severity of your horse's condition and the urgency of his arrival.

After calling the vet, start working your horse's ears. Begin at the base of the ear; fold the ear on itself with your fingers on one side and thumb on the other and slide along the length of the ear. When you reach the tip, rub it between your thumb and forefinger to activate the shock point. Keep repeating. Working each of your horse's ears individually, rather than both at the same time, is usually more effective. You can also use Raccoon TTouches around the base of the ear to activate the Triple Warmer meridian which affects the digestive and respiration systems.

You can stroke an ear while walking the horse if he seems to prefer moving. If the horse is standing or lying and not trying to roll or thrash, do the TTTouch techniques without walking. The horse may be tired from hours of discomfort and might need to rest.

Working the ears affects the horse's entire system – there are over 200 acupuncture points in the ear. Another helpful technique is rubbing the acupressure point for pain either between the nostrils or directly on the gums.

A horse's croup may swell in cases of severe colic. Gently work the area using Abalone TTouches on the flank and loin and abdomen. You can also gently do slides on the hair at the top of the tail and if the horse is comfortable with it, tail work can bring relief. There is a gas release point under the tail above the anus, rub in a circular motion with the finger.

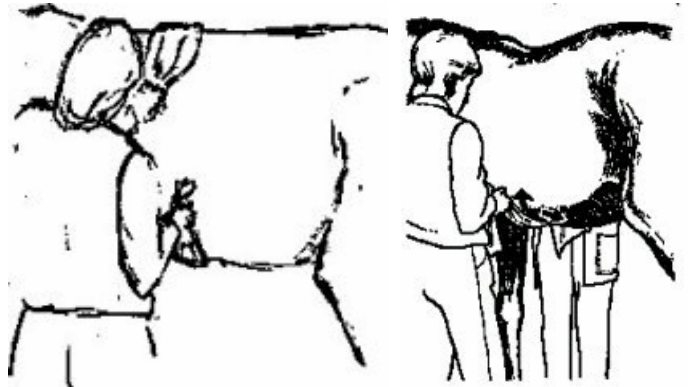
Belly Lifts are very helpful for gassy horses. Use a towel (folded six to twelve inches wide). Start near the elbows and

work back as far as you can. Support the belly with the towel and lift slowly and gently, hold for six to 10 seconds (sometimes longer if the horse seems relieved) and then release more slowly than you lifted.

The progression of each lift can be guided by one of the lifters. For example: "Lift, 2, 3....; Hold, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.: Release 10, 9, 8.....3,2,1. Notice that the release takes longer in order to ensure a soft, gradual lessening of the pressure. Sometimes using material such as velour or polar fleece gives a smoother and more gradual release.

Using hot towels has proven effective for some horses especially in cold weather. You could put the towel into the dryer before using or fold a Thermo-pad into the towel. In many cases, gut sounds become more active, and the horse is able to pass gas after a few series of lifts from his elbow to his flank.

Always work within the horse's comfort zone. You won't know what type of colic the horse is suffering until your veterinarian makes his diagnosis. The lifts cannot harm the horse even if it is more than gas colic, and they can provide



relief from pain as well as release gas.

If you don't have another person or a towel you can do belly lifts by yourself. Place your hands and forearms under the horse's belly and lift, hold and slowly release. A second way of doing belly lifts alone is to use a long towel or blanket. If you are standing on the left side of the horse, with your right hand, hold one end of the towel on the left side about four inches below the top of the horse's spine. The towel drapes over the spine and down the right side.

With your left hand, reach under the horse's belly and bring the towel to the left side. While holding the towel, keep your back straight and knees bent and then lift. You need only lift with the lower hand – the upper hand just supports the towel.

Caution: In this case, as with all ways of helping a distressed animal, be aware of your safety. Be safe, not sorry. Make sure that you can stay in balance while doing something and that you can move out of the way of danger quickly and qui-

Vital Signs: Normal Ranges

- ⇒ Temperature: 99-101 degrees F 37.5-38 C
- ⇒ Pulse: 30-40 beats per minute
- ⇒ Respiration: 10-20 breaths per minute
- ⇒ Gum Color: Pinkish
- ⇒ Capillary Refill: 1-1 1/2 seconds
- ⇒ Gut Sounds: Listen just behind the ribs for the nature of the sound as well as the frequency of the sound. A healthy horse's guts emit a symphony of sound. Silent guts are cause for concern.

etly. Listen to any small concerns your horse may have and stop or change what you are doing.

You might wonder what to do first. Since ear work is useful for injury, illness, stress, shock or nervousness, start with the ears if possible. Doing belly lifts on a horse that needs to move or is kicking is out of the question. In each case, you'll find the right combination for that particular horse. You have several tools; better yet, you have a way to help your horse in an emergency.

If you have practiced the ear work and belly lifts on your horse before an emergency arises, you will have any idea how he usually reacts to having his ears handled and how tight or loose his belly usually is. Many horses that don't normally like having their ears worked accept it when they really need it.

Important Point: TTEAM is never intended to replace the care of a veterinarian. It does, however, give you positive, helpful suggestions you can use while waiting for the vet to arrive or in situations where it is not possible to reach a veterinarian, such as while packing in the mountains.

Many of these suggestions for colic can be applied to other animals as well as people. Dogs, cats, cows, llamas, goats and reptiles can also suffer from gastrointestinal disorders. Using the belly lift, ear work and TTouch can benefit them

In Case of Colic:

- * Take pulse, respiration and temperature
- * Call your veterinarian
- * Stroke ears-one at a time- base to tip. Gently rub the tips.
- * Raccoon TTouch around the base of the ears.
- * Do belly lifts.
- * Apply firm pressure to the acupuncture point on nose.
- * Use Abalone TTouces and Python Lifts on the flank and belly area.
- * Do Clouded Leopard over the croup
- * Gently pull the hairs on top of the tail.
- * Rub the anus point (just under the tail above the anus) for gas release.
- * Rub the bottom of the tailbone.



Photo left: Raccoon TTouch around the base of the ear affects the Triple Heater Meridian, which balances the digestive system and is helpful for horses who colic chronically.



Photo left & above: For colic, gently yet firmly stroke each ear from base to tip, pressing the edges together. Work the tips between your thumb and index finger.



Photo above: In the flank area, use the Abalone TTouch to move the skin in gentle, large circles, or Python Lifts by using a flat hand, support the skin up about a half inch, pause and slowly carry the skin back to the starting point. You can use Abalone TTouces with a Python Lift on the underside of the horse's belly.