

Longevity in the Endurance Horse
A Veterinary Perspective
Ann Stuart, DVM

What leads to a SHORT Career?

Injury - lameness

Back Pain?

Metabolic

Behavior

Set Your Horse Up For Success

Selection of the prospect

conformation

genetics

Training

Training

vs

Conditioning

Overtraining

Wellness

preventive health care

nutrition

farrier

Body work

Injury

Overuse

Trauma

Overuse injury

repetitive motion

foot falls in a 25 vs 100

Concussion

Compound that with

abnormal loading and stress from

poor conformation

poor shoeing

poor rider

poor saddle fit

Traumatic Injury
one bad step
Footing
Speed

Compound that with
Fatigue - leg weary
Lack of fitness - muscles vs tendons vs ligaments vs bone

a smoldering overuse injury...

Address problems ASAP
Inflammation has benefits but also has costs!
Initial healing vs
chronic damage

DIAGNOSE Injuries and TREAT them
Dr Green
Dr Google
Dr DVM

Identify the lesion
Flexions and other stress tests
Blocks
Thermography
Xray
Ultrasound
MRI
Scintigraphy

Treatment and Prognosis
What exactly is the injury?
What is the job of the structure involved?
What is the nature of that tissue?

Joint injury
can lead to arthritis
subchondral bone inflammation
cartilage degradation
synovial fluid changes

Most common types of arthritis:

Ringbone

Spavin

Soft Tissue Injury

Can be as devastating as Bone and Joint

Muscle Injury

Strain

Tears

Will heal in weeks

Tendons

Flexor Tendons

Deep Digital Flexor

Superficial Digital Flexor

Heal in 4 to 8 months

Ligaments

Bone to Bone

Slow healing process

Stability of joints

May heal in 6 months to a Year

Suspensory Ligament

important load bearing structure

with Flexor tendons

Branches and Body

Sesmoidean Ligaments

below the fetlock

Suspension

Bear a lot of weight

Collateral ligaments

side to side stability

Backs

Saddle Fit

Equitation

Back Lesions

Chronic muscle pain

Ligament injury

Kissing spines

Arthritis in fascet joints
Nerve root compression

Work them up and rehabilitate them

Therapies

ice

compression

rest - REALLY

meds systemic topical

“ice-bute-wrap-rest”

joint therapies- Injections

Mesotherapy

Shock Wave

Corrective Shoeing

Support

Rehabilitation

Real Rest

Hand walking

Swimming

Vibration

Weight bearing exercise

Pay Attention. Be Observant

Know what is normal

Recognize abnormal

Keep records

They are kind enough to carry us.

In return, we should be kind enough to care for them.