



everything pets!

Massage... not just for humans anymore

BY ERICA F. CURLESS
Certified Equine Massage Therapist

Dogs and horses benefit from massage, just like us humans. Massage improves movement, range of motion, self carriage and overall body comfort. It also helps prevent injury and can assist with rehabilitation and recovery.

Dog and Pony Show is a mobile, certified animal massage business serving North Idaho and Eastern



Washington.

That means I come to your horse or dog. After assessing the animal's movement, I provide an individualized, therapeutic massage based on your animal's needs whether it's an elderly Husky with arthritic hips or an Australian Shepherd who earns its keep by herding sheep. The goal is to release muscle tension and assist the horse or dog in letting go of its bracing so they can improve how they carry themselves.

Think of the muscle bracing people get in their necks, shoulders and lower back, especially if they type on a computer for hours or stand with their knees and pelvis locked.

Currently I'm working with a Border Collie who is recovering from hip surgery. Weekly massage treatments help this 5-year-old dog regain movement and range of motion in the hip muscles and allow her to put more weight on that leg. The

treatments also ease tension and strain in her shoulders and front legs, which are compensating for the weakened hind end.

Another client is a Morgan mare who had sore spots on her back, near the sacroiliac joint where the pelvis is connected to the lumbar spine by soft tissues. This is a common weak spot in horses but crucial for impulsion. After one session, the mare moved freer and with longer strides. The sore spots disappeared and she performs better while at her job—giving rides to people with disabilities.

Massage can help to engage your horses' hindquarters, which is where their motor or power is located, and lift the withers and ribcage for more speed and longer strides. Increased suppleness can also help with lead changes and agility in sports such as barrel

racing, cutting and jumping.

Massage is a millenniums-old way to enhance performance.

Just as professional football players, golfers and cyclists depend on sports massage to improve muscle function and prevent injury, equine and canine massage is filling the same need in the multi-billion dollar animal industry.

When muscles work together properly, your performance animal can get the most motion and speed, meaning more trips to the winner's circle or more efficient work with fewer medical bills. That equals more return on your investment and a much happier and willing animal.

Erica F. Curless is a certified equine massage therapist and owner of Dog and Pony Show. For more info or an appointment, call (509) 991-7314 or ecurless@hotmail.com.



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- Development of canine and human relationships over time, and maturity from long-term repeated visits
- Mind stimulation
- Manners with dogs and humans
- Basic training skills
- Development and management of impulse control
- Enhancement of relationship with your dog due to physical and mental needs being met playing with doggie friends in other environments



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