

Inhand Equine Therapy



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Kinesiology Tape

I have recently added the use of kinesiology tape to the services I provide for my equine (and canine) clients. Kinesiology tape, or kinesiotope, was developed in the 1970's in Japan but has since been refined in North America. In human athletes, therapists have been using this tape for years - it was really prevalent this summer on the world stage at the Pan American Games with nearly every team having at least one team member taped in some way!

If you have been taped yourself, you will have felt the benefits to improve performance and mobility, so I am really excited to have the chance to add this modality to my tool belt. Kinesiology tape has four main uses with great results: injury recovery, injury prevention, postural reorientation, and training.

The tape is designed to move on the same planes as the skin, and when applied it lifts the skin, effectively creating a decompression of the structures under the dermal layer. This decompression allows compromised vascular channels to open up, increasing circulation, oxygenation, and waste product removal, as well as relieving pressure on the nerves in the area and reducing nerve hyper-stimulation.

The body's pain receptors are in the skin and with the increase of circulation and stimulation to that area one can often decrease the pain and spasm cycle and effectively allow the body to begin to heal the area.

The tape is made of breathable material to be used during exercise, so it can support a specific structure and it can remind the body how to hold its posture in a different way than may be habitual. Thus, a rider is able to train with less resistance from old muscle memory patterns.

With more circulation to the taped area, the body can feed soft tissue better and eliminate waste products faster, which, for the performance horse rider, is a huge benefit. This helps reduce fatigue and improve recovery.

The effectiveness of kinesiology tape lies in the hands of the practitioner applying the tape. Tape just stuck on the body arbitrarily will not produce the desired effect. The practitioner's knowledge of anatomy combined with the understanding of correct taping application protocols is the key to successful taping. The taping application protocol is designed to allow the tape to move with the underlying structure while appropriately affecting that structure in a positive way.

Kinesiotape can stay on anywhere from one hour to four or five days. The body will decide when it is finished for the most part. The tape is of course sticking to the horse's hair, which is rooted in the skin. Hair produces oils that can make it a difficult surface to which tape will stick. If your horse has an oily coat or has had their hair recently shaved, the glue on the back of the tape may not last as long, however the length of time is not as much a factor as what will be stimulated in the first hour of use.

If you find that your horse's tape is peeling or rolling up, just trim the loosened ends off. If you find a piece has come nearly all the way off, simply remove the tape by rolling it in the direction of the hair. The decompression of the tissue will have begun within that first hour and the benefits under the skin will be well underway.



****NOTE: Therapy is not a replacement for Veterinary Care.****