

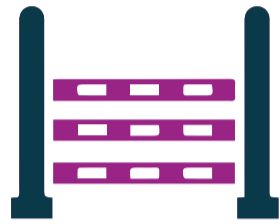
# 5

## facts about equine physiotherapy



### 1

#### Tendinopathy is common in competition horses

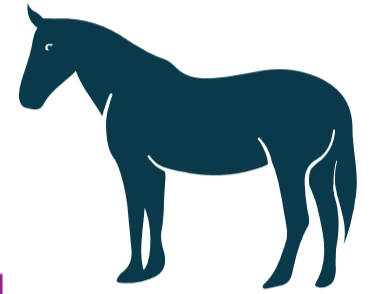


Evidence suggests diagnosis and treatment of tendon injury requires:

- clinical diagnosis, as imaging correlates poorly with tendon pain and function
- a gradual loading program, the most evidence-based management approach
- laser and pulsed ultrasound, which can offer some short-term relief.

### 2

#### Ideal attributes and common vulnerabilities cut across equine disciplines



Physiotherapists need to assess a horse's capacity to adapt to exercise and understand:

- ideal equine qualities (eg, long gaskins, short and strong metatarsals)
- common areas of vulnerability, such as the spine, pelvis and shoulder
- that different joints are variously affected by degrees of load and change.

### 3

#### The rider affects the horse

Animal physiotherapists can manage both components of the horse–rider team knowing that:

- the rider can affect the performance of the horse
- tactile communication between horse and rider can be altered by rider injury or dysfunction
- each should be managed and assessed as a single functional unit.



### 4

#### Back pain is a common contributor to poor equine performance

It is a challenge to definitively diagnose back pain, which can:

- require spinal surgery when pain is not resolved medically
- lead to atrophy of the multifidus muscle even after pain resolves
- benefit from physiotherapy that focuses on strengthening the multifidus.



### 5

#### Ill-fitting saddles affect thoracolumbar kinematics

Regular professional saddle-fitting advice is needed to avoid:

- ulceration, bruising and reduction in limb range of the horse
- saddle tree issues (eg, asymmetrical or incorrect flocking, damaged or broken trees)
- incorrect pressure distribution and changes in thoracolumbar spinal kinematics.



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