



Ballybrown Equine Clinic



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APPLYING KNEE BANDAGES

Given the almost constant use they are put to, horse's knees are vulnerable to stress, fatigue and traumatic injury. It may be that your vet has recommended knee bandage to help heal injury, surgery site or to support weak joints.

KNEE BANADGES HELP IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS

Prevent or reduce swelling and oedema
Provide support for a weak or injured joint
Reduce motion of the joint
Protect a wound or surgical site from contamination or trauma.
Absorb fluids

SPECIAL KNOW HOW

Because the front leg is relatively straight and the knee bends and straightens as the horse moves about, wrapping and securing the bandage will require some special know how to keep the bandage in place.

Most horses tolerate having a knee wrapped without much fuss, as with any type of bandage can be hazardous if applied incorrectly. There is always a risk of constricting vessels, tendons and ligaments or causing pressure sores if the layers are not applied smoothly, evenly and just the right amount of tension.

Of particular concern with the knee bandage is preventing undue pressure on the two prominent points at the back and inside of the knee. A bandage that's too tight or incorrectly applied can cause sores to develop there.

If you have never bandaged before ask your vet to demonstrate the proper techniques. Practice under supervision before bandaging on your own.

SUPPLIES

Due to the legs columnar shape and the fact that it's wider at the knee than at the cannon bone, you will be working against gravity, you will likely have the best success with bandaging materials that conform to the shape of the leg and permit movement without slipping or loosening. A good elastic adhesive tape will be needed to securely keep the bandage situated over the knee.

If the bandage will cover a wound or surgical site, the materials should also be sterile.

You will need:

- Sterile dressing to cover wounds.
- Cotton wool.
- Stretched gauze (mollelast)
- Vet wrap

- Elastic adhesive tape to protect and secure the bandage.

BANDAGING GUIDELINES

1. Cover the wound with the sterile, non stick dressing.
2. Surround the knee with the cotton wool. Extend it 4-6 inches above and below the knee and make sure it lies flat and wrinkle free against the knee.
3. Begin Wrapping the stretch gauze (mollelast) around the cotton wool 4-6 inches below the knee and approximately one half inch above the edge of the padding.
4. Wrap the vetwrap front to back, outside to inside, spiraling upwards whilst exerting just enough pull to stretch the fabric to half its maximum extended length.
5. Overlap each preceding layer by 50 % using smooth uniform tension to compress the padding without forming lumps or ridges beneath the bandage.
6. Work up the leg until the bandage extends 4-6 inches above the point of the knee, covering the padding to within a half inch of the edge.
7. Depending on the nature and location of the injury your vet will advise you whether or not to cover the accessory carpal bone at the back of the knee. It may be necessary to cut out a hole in the bandage, or Create a donut shaped pad, over this point to prevent pressure sores.
8. When bandaging, use enough pressure to minimize swelling and keep the bandage in place, but never wrap so tightly that you can not easily slip a finger between the bandage and the leg.
9. Do not wrap too loosely as the bandage may slip or fail to do its job.
10. Secure and seal the bandage using a stretch adhesive tape at the top and the bottom.
11. If the bandage is to remain in place for the time, or is being used to protect a wound, it may be advisable to completely cover the support wrap with a protective layer to prevent dirt and debris from contaminating the bandage.
12. If you have any problems with the knee bandage slipping begin by wrapping the lower leg from coronet band to several inches below the knee. This provides a foundation for the knee bandage and will help keep it in place. Some situations may call for a full length bandage to adequately restrict motion at the knee.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS.

- ❖ Knees are vital structures. Any injury to the joint or immediate surrounding area should be evaluated by your vet.
- ❖ A horse with a condition requiring a knee bandage should be confined to a stable unless otherwise directed by your vet.
- ❖ Check the bandage several times a day to make sure it has not tightened, loosened or slipped out of place.
- ❖ Make sure the bandage does not cut off circulation, compress tendons or create pressure sores, cause skin irritation, redness or discomfort.
- ❖ Monitor and evaluate the horse carefully. If swelling develops above or below the bandage, lameness increases, or the horse becomes distressed or begins to bite, paw or rub the bandaged site contact your vet.
- ❖ Watch for any other signs of ill health. If the horse becomes depressed, irritable, loses its appetite or has an elevated temperature, consult your vet.

- ❖ Change the bandage as directed by your vet or immediately if it becomes wet or soiled.

If you have any further questions or concerns about knee bandaging techniques, contact Ballybrown Equine Clinic.