

## Four Benefits of the Equine Natural Movement Series

The Equine Natural Movement Series can help horses return to their original flexibility and balance. It may seem surprising that a typical series of five sessions of this structural integration bodywork can make such claims, yet clients report the work really does make a difference.

The sessions focus specifically on connective tissue called fascia which surrounds and connects all tissues in the body, including muscles, bones and organs. When fascia becomes stuck and shortened it can affect the horse's strength and flexibility. Damaged fascia causes muscles to shorten and even adhere to each other, restricting movement and disrupting the horse's natural balance. Fascial adhesions and shortenings can be caused by many factors such as injury, strain, surgery, inflammation, kicks, poorly fitting saddles, and even rider imbalances.



Equine Natural Movement sessions loosen up the horse's structural framework, releasing stuck areas, dispersing tension patterns and correcting imbalances. This work can benefit horses in a number of ways.

1. Equine Natural Movement has a very different approach to improving horses, different from equine massage or chiropractic and resulting in long lasting and often permanent changes. In fact, the changes brought about by Equine Natural Movement can enhance these other types of bodywork and allow them to have greater effect since the horse is no longer combating bound-up tissues and structural imbalances. An equine chiropractor once stated, with a smile, that horses who had the Equine Natural Movement series made him "look good" because their adjustments held better. He said the spinal adjustments he did were also easier to attain because the connective tissue had stopped pulling the spine out of alignment.

2. By removing restrictions in the horse's tissues, many horses are able to stretch out more and access more of their potential. These changes in the fascia help improve balance and increase freedom of movement, allowing the horse's movement to become freer, smoother, more flexible and supple. Muscles freed from fascial restrictions regain their full strength. Horse owner Tracy Jennerwein of Brooklyn, CT said, "My saddle fitter was amazed at the increased muscle mass along my horse's back after the series."



3. With the increased muscle strength and reach, many horses perform and compete more efficiently and successfully. Tracy Jennerwein described her horses' responses to the work: "The benefits of the Equine Natural Movement series are evidenced through an overall improvement in my horses' way of going. They are more supple and balanced and mentally ready to perform."

Even if a horse doesn't compete, owners often report changes in performance, noticing their horses are more energetic and more comfortable. Our own pony has improved remarkably since he's had an Equine Natural Movement series. Before the series, he

couldn't hold a canter, resisted jumping and moved in a crooked manner. Since going through the series, his movement has straightened out greatly, and he now enjoys cantering and jumping.

4. Surprised owners have also noticed a significant change in their horses' attitudes. Many horses display an increase of wellbeing and willingness after a series. This makes sense when you consider that many horses have experienced lumps, bumps and bruises throughout their lifetime. Even minor injuries can cause the fascial adhesions that knock a horse out of balance and give discomfort in one or more areas of the body.

Imagine how such a horse might feel when being ridden. How is your mood affected when you're in discomfort? Most people become short tempered, irritable, disinclined to try new things or do anything that aggravates the situation. Does this sound like your horse on an average day?

After the Equine Natural Movement series, some owners describe specific changes in their horse's personality. Jacqueline Davies of Wakefield, RI said, "Following these sessions I found my horse to be more willing to work. He was moving forward freely, he had a floating quality about him that was new to me and working with much more freedom and greater extension than I had seen in a long time. Beyond his new physical freedom I found him to be a much happier horse."

Why does the series have this effect? By bringing greater comfort and ease to movement and general well-being, a horse's entire outlook can change making that horse a better companion, more willing to work and more eager to adventure with their rider.

Deb Montaquila of East Greenwich, RI, triumphantly stated, "Through Karen's work the horse I always knew was there has come back."

What could be finer than that?



*To learn more about the Equine Natural Movement Series, speak with Karen Small at 401-480-6897 or visit her website, [www.KarenSmall.com](http://www.KarenSmall.com), to read more about this technique. Karen offers a free 20 minute consultation to help you know if this work may be right for your horse.*

*The beautiful horse pictured here is "Amazing Grace" (aka Moriah Mornific), a 10 year old Egyptian Arabian mare who found her way to Ray Hackett of New World Riding ([www.newworldriding.com](http://www.newworldriding.com)) at Great Oak Farm in Berlin, MA where she lovingly embraces a new and improved life.*