

Routine Care for Equines throughout the Year

There are many things to consider throughout the year to enable optimum care of your equine. Their shape can change throughout the year depending on environmental circumstances such as the weather, how much work they are in, how much grass is available and how long they may be stabled for.

Exercise and Tack

Whilst many of our RDA equines are busy looking after their RDA participants it is also important to make sure that they have a varied lifestyle. Hacking out can be a welcome relief from arena work, you could even sign up as an RDA Endurance Group and let your participants earn rosettes for the kilometres that they ride. None disabled riding is also an important part of an equines care. Horses may require specific work to build up muscle tone and fitness. It may also be a useful opportunity to feel if anything was wrong that may not be noticed from the ground. Tack can also be checked for signs of wear and tear and correct fit. As equines change shape throughout the seasons with weight loss and gain, their tack, particularly their saddle may not fit in the same way. Having a qualified saddle fitter out twice a year will give you peace of mind. The Society of Master Saddlers can help you locate a qualified fitter nearest to you MasterSaddlers.co.uk

Teeth

Regular dental care is essential for healthy teeth and gums, to promote normal chewing and good digestion, and acceptance of the bit and rein contact when ridden.

Teeth should be checked annually as a minimum and can be carried out by a Vet or a British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) approved Dental Technician. You can find a list here [British Association of Equine Dental Technicians - Home \(baedt.com\)](http://British Association of Equine Dental Technicians - Home (baedt.com))

The teeth of adult horses should receive routine professional attention at least once per year, even where no specific signs of a problem are observed. Older horses also require more frequent dental inspections as they are more prone to dental problems and may suffer from loose or damaged teeth, decay or infections from impacted food.

Back

A horse should be checked regularly from head to tail for signs of tension, soreness or pain. It is advisable to get your horse's back checked if the animal is exhibiting any signs of discomfort and also to identify or rule out any of the more probable causes. In the first instance speak to your Vet who may wish to recommend alternative therapy.

Several therapeutic treatment options may be recommended for an equine that has been diagnosed as having a bad back. In addition to rest, controlled exercise and removing the original cause (for example a poorly fitting saddle) the horse may benefit from a course of physical therapy from an approved therapist. Therapies for equines are similar to those for humans, and include physiotherapy, massage therapy, chiropractic and osteopathy.

Equines may benefit from an annual check by an approved Physiotherapist even if they have never previously had any issues. Again, refer to your Vet for advice and recommendations.