

Microcurrent Therapy

This ages-old therapy uses subtle electrical current to help with a wide variety of ailments and injuries.

by Deborah Powell

We all know that “aha!” moment when discovering something special. Microcurrent is an ages-old therapy that can change the quality of your life, and the lives of your loved ones and cherished animals.

Microcurrent seems to trump other therapies for muscle, tendon, ligament and nerve damage when compared to the costs and outcomes reported from other types of therapies. Even EIPH (bleeders) and bowel impaction colic are often alleviated by microcurrent. The current is delivered through applicators called electrodes, similar to other TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) units. Microcurrent electrode accessories for animal application come in the form of small pads, combs, massage rollers, stylish pens or probes, gloves, body wraps, and clips for electro-acupuncture.

HOW IT BEGAN

It's impossible to know who was first to use microcurrent as a therapy. Years ago, for fun, old electrotherapy boxes found at garage sales were tested at various microcurrent training sessions. It was discovered that some electrotherapy boxes dating from

the 1800s and earlier were, in part, crude microcurrent devices from Asia, Europe and the Americas.

Microcurrent became recognized as such when Thomas Wing, DC, LAc, ND introduced his own inventions in the late 1970s to chiropractors and physiotherapists.

Dr. Bjorn Nordenstrom (Biologically Closed Electric Circuits, 1983), a brilliant pioneer of diagnostic radiology, furthered the idea of microcurrent when he proposed that an electrical current flows through the body as a complete network, connecting entire biological systems (picture a series of electrical cables coursing throughout every cell in the body). Dr. Nordenstrom's theory has been compared to Chi (Qi) energy in Chinese medicine.

Another medical practitioner, Dr. Robert O Becker (BodyElectric, 1985), an orthopedic surgeon, turned to a life of research after becoming frustrated by the medical establishment's approach to the body as a collection of primarily individual parts. Working with salamanders and frogs, Becker showed that limbs would re-attach with a tiny current jumping to the severed part. He

Some of the various accessories that can be used with a microcurrent device. The low-level current applied topically through these stimulation devices mimics the body's production of electrical current.



Photo courtesy of Tarah Reghitto

called this the “current of injury”. In 1984, Dr. Becker and a co-researcher used tiny levels of current to regenerate a child’s amputated fingertip.

HOW IT WORKS

Microcurrent therapy (MCT) is low-level electrical stimulation therapy. It is similar to other topically applied stimulation devices, with one huge exception – the output of current from MCT is 1,000 times lower than the majority of TENS devices sold for pain.

This very low-level current mimics the body’s production of electrical current, with an added boost. The slightly higher current of MCT, as compared to that produced naturally by the body, has been shown to increase cellular energy or ATP (adenosine triphosphate) by up to 500% in rat studies. This means that damage, whether in nerves, tendons, ligaments or muscles, can be repaired with less scar tissue and inflammation than when the body heals on its own.

It takes a series of treatments to restore integrity to the damaged tissues. With MCT, it is about treating the body as a whole entity. In practice, it incorporates the drawing of current to specific areas in the body affected by injury, while also using acupuncture points to boost the meridians for good energy flow (Chi) throughout.

Amperes Scales

Pico (micromicro)	pA	1,000,000,000,000 (10 ⁻¹²)/1 micro	Human body range
Nano (millimicro)	nA	1,000/1 micro	Human body range
Micro	uA	1,000,000/1 ampere	Just above human range
Milli	mA	1,000/1 ampere	Stuns human nerve sheath

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FINDING A GOOD MICROCURRENT THERAPIST

Some equine massage therapists and rehab facilities offer microcurrent sessions. Ask your veterinarian if they know someone they are comfortable referring you to. Your friends may also be able to recommend a therapist they have used and liked. If you are not using a recommended source, be sure to ask for client references.

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*Source: American Farriers Journal, Jan/Feb 2015, Page 87.

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Factoid:

Horse owners from the mid-80s may recall therapists with large equipment that looked like a rack home stereo system with coiled wires reaching to the horse, connected to brass plates. They were considered revolutionary at the time, but the cost scared most people away from even considering owning or using the equipment.

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VERSATILITY

Today's options for microcurrent therapy are numerous, and many devices are quite small, making them easy for storage and travel. There are topically applied disposable patches; machines similar to other TENS devices; and sophisticated biofeedback devices that allow the user to locate problems and track progress. Some of the latest versions are able to track changes and treat with microcurrent simultaneously. These choices enable you to select specific treatment styles that make sense in terms of time management and efficacy, while providing spa-like pleasure for your horse. 



Photo courtesy of Deborah Powell

Microcurrent electrode accessories come in many forms, like this back pad that connects to a microcurrent device.

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SUGGESTED TREATMENT FOR A LEG INJURY

- *Treat with microcurrent three times a week – two treatments on the leg to address the injury, and one all-body treatment to relieve compensating soreness and open the meridians.*
- *As improvement occurs, reduce the treatment sessions.*
- *Continue with maintenance treatments if the condition is chronic, or if the horse is experiencing a high workload and/or is competing.*

Deborah Powell is the founder of Matrix Therapy Products, author of *MicroCurrent for Horses* (2008) and *MicroCurrent for Dogs* (2014). therapyproducts.net.