



Alternative Health Care for Respiratory Issues

Author Deborah Powell explains how two therapy tools have helped horses' respiratory issues, as well as helped with a more recent need - her husband's diagnosis of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

My husband's COPD consists of emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and asthma. He also has acquired out door and food allergies. The combination creates numerous challenges. His pulmonologist put him on COPD medications, and supplements to help offset the use of corticosteroids, and handed him a brochure with suggestions on how to live with COPD.

From habit, we used therapy devices that I use on horses to try and help him manage his symptoms better. The results, with his improved quality of life, surprised his doctor. With severe COPD, it is typical to be hospitalized regularly due to severe flare ups. And yet, my husband's doctor dropped him from scheduled visits every six months to one annual visit and he is no longer on the COPD meds.

MCT: A Natural Alternative for Lungs
For horses, microcurrent therapy has helped manage respiratory conditions for decades. This might be a runny nose, cough, recovering from illness, or simply to improve lung function. MCT is low-level electrical stimulation in the microampere range a 1,000 times lower than most TENS (transcutaneous electrical stimulators) units. Studies on microampere have shown that it promotes the increased production of ATP (adenosine triphosphate) by 500%. This increased cellular energy boosts the body's self-healing mechanisms.

Microcurrent devices are floating around at most race tracks. To address a horse's lungs and respiratory conditions, the microcurrent therapy protocols consist of setting up the electrodes around the barrel of the horse as well as sometimes including the lung meridian.

MCT is also used for exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage (EIPH) as a management tool, to help horses with early onset bleeding. A Louisiana Downs track veterinarian (since deceased) shared findings with Betty Fettner, that necropsies with MCT history showed regeneration in the lung tissues, especially the alveoli.

For my husband's COPD, he uses MCT for sinuses, headaches and to reduce sinus swelling to improve breathing. However, nothing fully managed the chest tightness and the thick mucus from the bronchitis that becomes trapped in lungs and airways.

We tried switching his nebulizer from the prescribed medication albuterol to a diluted salt solution to loosen and liquefy the mucus. However, the salt solution was hard to perfect. Fluctuations of his COPD symptoms caused the treatment with the nebulizer to frequently feel too strong, akin to a burning sensation.

Then we discovered the VibraLung. Because lungs of all animals are quite similar, this overlap between my husband's treatments and equine treatments gives a broader perspective on the benefits of these therapies.

A Specialized Lung Therapy Tool

The VibraVM Lung device entered the equine market in 2007. The VibraVM is an acoustic percussor with sound waves and frequencies incorporated into several selectable programs.

The first function is to clear the lungs of particulates and liquefy thickened mucus. Horses cough, sneeze, or swallow whatever



RESPIRATORY RELIEF

The VibraVM® uses sound waves introduced through the nose to breakup accumulations of harmful secretions in the respiratory system for easy expulsion.

has been released. This can even consist of old blood clots settled deep within the lower chambers of the lungs from bleeders. Another program acts as a bronchial dilator to alleviate constricted airways. Horses diagnosed with heaves get instant relief with noticeable changes in breathing.

In horses, chronic alveolar emphysema can be a result of long term effects of other chronic lung ailments from over distension of the alveoli until there is no elasticity. The hopes are that with repeated usage of the VibraVM that the vibrations improve the elasticity back into lung structures. For example, a horse was treated that had emphysema where there were no air movement sounds in the lowest lobe of the lungs. Then after several treatments with the VibraVM sounds could be heard with a stethoscope.

At a recent MCT training and bodywork workshop, one of the elderly horses had a noticeable abnormal breathing pattern.

The owner described the older rescue horse as always having it, but that anytime the horse was slightly stressed he presented increased irregular, labored breathing. One of the attendees had her VibraVM lung device with her and volunteered to do a treatment.

The horse was surprisingly eager to receive the cup over his nose after a two minute introduction. After the 6 minute session, the horse's demeanor was calm and he was breathing better and his muscles were less tense. Interestingly enough, this is also what my husband notices. He says you can feel the treatment go straight to the problem area and that the sensations from the machine are different, depending on the day and the amount of swelling.

With the severity of his condition, he uses it every day. However for horses it is used daily until the desire improvement is seen.

There is one caveat, it is nosier than some nebulizers. My husband finds the quality of his life trumps the noise.



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For horses, after the condition is improved the VibraVM can be used as a maintenance device or to improve oxygenation when performance demands require it. A quick clearing of any debris or generalized swelling before a race will greatly improve the comfort of the horse.

Healing with Alternative Health Care

MCT and the VibraVM lung devices are two methods that promote wellbeing, with no adverse side effects. MCT additionally helps the entire body recover from a multitude of conditions. Sandee Foster, trainer, breeder, and therapist has been combining MCT and the VibraVM in a single session and liking the results.

Her mare that would turn and run when she saw the nebulizer eagerly waits for the VibraVM and her MCT.

Teal Stoll, has a racer only she can ride due to his bucking and difficult nature. He and two of her other horses have COPD, and all of them absolutely hated the nebulizer. Stoll contemplated switching from the medications to the colloidal or chelated silver additives for the nebulizer, until as an asthmatic herself she tried them and realized how badly they created a burning sensation her in sinuses.

Stoll's temperamental horse was her first test case for the VibraVM lung. He took to

the machine instantly, something she was sure it would take weeks to do. He now meets her at the gate and patiently waits for his lung treatments. His demeanor is changing to friendly, and in his last race he got his best time yet, finishing in the top 10 of 400.

Therapies that horses enjoy are a crucial component for improving the bond in a working relationship. The VibraVM device being unattached to the horse allows the horse to make the choice to lean into and receive treatment or lean away. This builds confidence, trust and provides feedback. Horses that need the treatment readily want it and the others simply act indifferent

Combining veterinary care with MCT and the VibraVM provide options for improving respiratory conditions. You can have confidence in trying them, knowing they are not simply the latest fad.

Whether the horses treated make it in racing or are headed to their next venture, by using alternative health care to help the horse's lungs it will keep the horse in a better condition throughout its life.

Deborah Powell is author of *MicroCurrent for Horses*, *MicroCurrent for Dogs* and *MCT for Bleeders a Quick Guide*. For more articles on these therapies and information on training opportunities, visit therapypproducts.net