

Shock Wave Therapy for Hunter Jumpers: Safe, Fast and Effective

By Gerhard Kinas

The next time your horse is hurting from an injury, or suffering from an acute or chronic condition, you may want to consider equine shock wave therapy, a treatment that has proven to be effective for providing pain relief as well as accelerated healing to joints, tendons, ligaments, muscles, bones and wounds.



Extracorporeal shock wave therapy -- often abbreviated as ESWT -- is administered outside the body (that's what extracorporeal means), which is one of the main advantages to this type of therapy: it is non-invasive so it doesn't carry the risks that invasive therapies do.

What Is Shock Wave and How Does It Work?

Shock waves are acoustic pulses that transmit energy from outside the body to a specific area. Equine shock waves can be transmitted in two forms: focused shock waves for concentrated, deeper penetration and radial shock waves, for covering a wider area. Shock waves increase circulation and blood flow to the area, help dissipate fluid, stimulate cell activity, and upregulate growth factors. Shock waves also create an analgesic or numbing effect, downregulate pain receptors and may increase endorphins, all of which help the horse feel better.

The Advantages and Benefits of ESWT

In addition to being non-invasive with no risk of infection or complications, equine shock wave therapy offers these important benefits and advantages over injections, surgery or drugs:

- Shock wave therapy provides a rapid reduction in pain levels.
- ESWT speeds healing in the affected area and decreases healing time.
- There are no side effects to the treatment.
- Shock wave requires no sedation, medication or anesthesia.
- The treatment is performed on an outpatient basis.
- Portable shock wave units enable the vet to bring the treatment to the horse rather than the horse owner having to undertake transport.
- Shock wave generally requires only a short course of treatment, normally 3-5 sessions.
- ESWT is cost effective compared to other treatment options.

Applications of Shock Wave Therapy for Equine Use

ESWT is particularly effective for these common hunter jumper conditions:

- SI (sacroiliac) issues
- Suspensory ligament and other ligament injuries
- Bone injuries, fractures and bone pain
- Sesamoid injuries and fractures
- Sore ankles
- Bowed tendons
- Ringbone
- Deep heel pain
- Kissing spines
- Coffin joint issues
- Sore backs
- Joint soreness
- Arthritis

Proven Results

Shock wave therapy was once a debated treatment option, but now there are scores of case studies, field reports and controlled scientific studies that support its effectiveness. In addition, advancements in technology have made the equipment quieter, more efficient and capable of delivering shock waves with minimal or no discomfort to the horse. Some models, such as the Duolith® from ESWT.net, can deliver both radial and focused shock waves in one unit.

Ask Your Veterinarian

Next time your horse is hurting, ask your vet about shock wave therapy. If they do not already use this effective healing modality in their practice, you might ask them to start!

