

# The TTEAM Body Wrap

By Robyn Hood

The Body Wrap is a TTEAM tool for influencing a horse's behaviour, increasing awareness and improving performance. The body wrap is composed of two elastic bandages (Ace & Tensor are brands we find maintain their elasticity) secured together. It can be put on in various configurations, each way giving the horse different feedback of tension or movement patterns. The wrap maintains a constant connection with the body because it moves with the horse. This is particularly significant for horses with neurological deficits because the continual sensory input encourages the rebuilding of the neural pathways.

Interestingly, the body wrap was first used with dogs. In the beginning we used a body rope, in a figure 8 on horses but it didn't stay on dogs very well. Out of necessity, Janice Fron P2 who now works in the TTEAM office, tried a horse's leg wrap on one of her dogs and reported the effect so we started experimenting with elastic bandages. After seeing the effect the wraps had on the dogs we realized they were another way of "chunking" down the body ropes for the horse and then we saw they had other benefits as well.

Most horses accept the body wrap with little preparation. Depending on the horse you want to consider which method to use:

- ◆ Before tying the wrap back to itself, start by holding the end of the wrap while you are standing just behind the horse's shoulder. Have a helper lead the horse forward a few steps and stop. Repeat. If the horse seems comfortable and accepting the wrap go ahead and tie it
- ◆ If the horse has very tight hindquarters or tail, start by holding the wrap over the horse's tail and repeat the walk-halt exercise before taking the wrap under the tail.
- ◆ If you are alone and your horse is comfortable about having his tail and hindquarters handled, you may be able to put the body wrap on by yourself in a large stall or contained area.

The changes that occur with the body wrap can be subtle or very dramatic. A strung-out horse or one who is camped under may suddenly take on a more balanced stance, having "a leg at each corner". Or a horse's topline may change so he looks "rounder". You may see more movement and engagement behind. If you have a horse that is unbalanced, reactive or strung-out on the lunge line put on a body wrap and you may see an immediate change.

The bodywrap also helps horses who are nervous about things behind them or who rush or are hesitant about moving through narrow spaces. It helps with spatial awareness by connecting the front and back end of the horse. If your horse

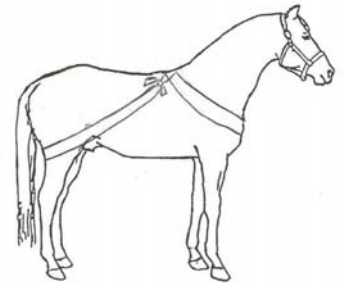
has a tendency to freeze the bodywrap can help.

The configuration of bodywraps is really only limited by your imagination. If you apply the principal that it should be snug enough to stay in place, without over stretching the wrap, and it doesn't restrict the horse's movement then be creative.

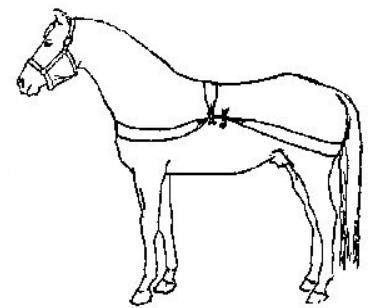
In the booklet that Carol Lang compiled for Complementary Neurological Rehabilitation there are a variety of bodywraps that were found beneficial. Here are some of the usual and unusual wraps we have used.

## Bodywraps:

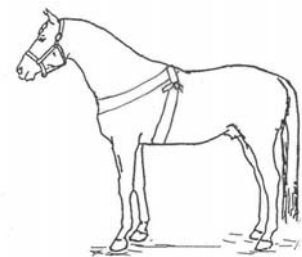
**Figure 8:** The wrap goes around the horse's neck, crosses over or behind the withers (you may add a twist) and the long end continues around the hindquarters and under the tail. It is then tied in a bow back to the short end.



**The "bridge":** Start with one wrap tied around the horse's neck and back to itself, leaving a tail. With a nervous horse you might do some leading exercises with just the first wrap and still notice a change in the horse's posture. Now tie a second wrap in a bow to the tail of the first wrap. Take the second wrap around the horse's hindquarters and tie it to the wrap that's around the horse's neck. The idea is to have the wrap form a "bridge" over the horse's back just behind the withers.

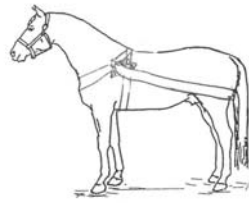


**Half-wrap:** This is a wrap that was first used with dogs. For horses it is helpful with preparing young horses for a girth or with trained horses who are cold-backed or girthy. Take one wrap around the horse's chest and cross it over the withers, attach a second wrap to one end and take it under the belly and tie to

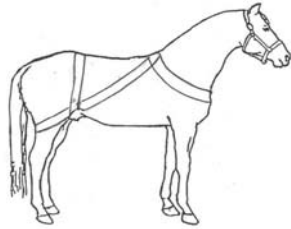


the other end of the first wrap.

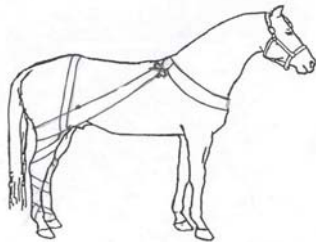
From this wrap you can also add a third wrap around the hindquarters and attach to the front of the half-wrap.



**Hip wrap:** Another wrap taken from our work with dogs. I have used this with horses recovering from pelvic injuries. Start with one wrap across the chest and over the withers. Tie a second wrap to one end, take the wrap around the outside of the hind leg, bring it up on the inside of the same leg (like a leg strap on a horse blanket) and up over the top of the croup. Repeat the same with a third wrap on the other side. Be sure to prepare your horse for having the wrap around the stifle area of the hind leg.



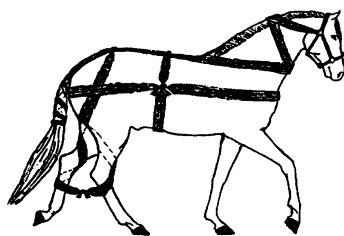
**Leg wraps:** We have used wraps down the front and hind legs of horses - to help ground them and give feedback about movement. Usually we would tie two wraps together and take them over the hips, or withers for the front legs. Wind the wraps around the original body wrap to help keep it in place and then spiral the wraps down the legs. You can either tuck the end of the wrap back under itself or tie loosely depending on how much extra wrap you have.



**Special Wraps:**

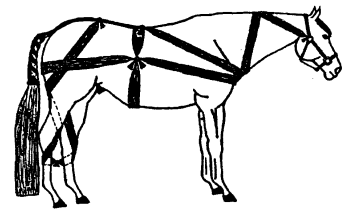
One horse in the Neurological Deficit study was not bending in the turns and so wraps were tied to the halter. The tail was then wrapped to complete the connection of head to hind. It greatly improved the work in the labyrinth.

Horses with neurological deficits often have a stiff and inflexible posture. Wrapping the neck and connecting it to wraps on the body may help to lower the head and en-



courage more relaxed movement through the body.

Wrapping the legs can help to ground a horse. When helping to improve neurological deficits some interesting varieties have been used. This variation shows the legs connected across the back of the cannons and just below the hocks. With some of the horses in the study this combination wrap proved significantly more effective than the first two trials. The horses walked freely while negotiating patterns of poles. The tight circles of the neurological exam improved a great deal.



As you can see there are a variety of ways of using the wraps. You may or may not notice an immediate difference but even if you don't notice anything the horse's nervous system will still be getting information. In adapting body wraps for horses with neurological deficits it seems helpful to be creative in order to get the horse to move more effectively and bring awareness to various body parts. Care must be taken to assure that the horse is working within his capabilities and is not concerned about the wraps.

Because of the constant connection of the Body Wrap and the way it moves with the horse as he moves, it has been successful in making horses more aware of their movement and improving gait. The wraps give horses boundaries and seems to make them more secure.

Horse like people have a variety of learning styles. TTEAM includes four learning modalities: visual – wand, auditory – voice; tactile – touch; kinaesthetic – movement. The body wrap gives tactile and kinaesthetic feedback.

**Half-Wrap for Dogs:**

Lucie Leclerc drew the following showing the steps of putting a Half-Wrap on a dog.

