

## Behaviour modification

Unfortunately many horses, ponies and donkeys don't revel at the idea of being seen by a vet and they can prove a challenge to treat, particularly, when they are anxious and in pain. Here at Summerleaze we try to work with our clients in every situation with each individual to assure the best possible outcome. At Summerleaze we are now able to offer a wide variety of different options to help reduce your equine's stress related to seeing a vet or, following prescribed treatment, such as box-rest and in-hand walking.



October 2022

Newsletter



## What can I do if my horse hates needles or vets?

This situation can be very stressful and potentially dangerous for all of those involved. When you book any appointment please do let us know if this is the case so our vets can discuss with you whether medication or clicker training might be appropriate. Please also remind the vet or nurse attending the appointment that your horse is nervous so they can ensure everything is as quiet as possible for them.



## What is clicker training?

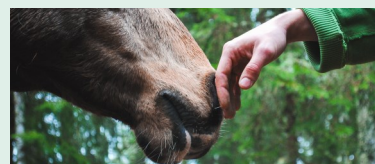
Clicker training is a method of training using positive reinforcement. When the desired behaviour is performed a click sound is made and the equine is given a treat. This desired behaviour can be anything from just standing still whilst you touch the horse's headcollar to using an inhaler. The training relies on the operator timing the clicks appropriately and having patience to keep repeating tasks. Our nurses will come out to your yard to clicker train your horse, they will also teach you how to continue the training with your horse. The training relies on repetition so it is essential that you continue the training. Our vets are trained in clicker training and can use this when treating your horse.

## Does clicker training work?

Clicker training works exceptionally well in 90% of cases with the majority only needing one session with one of our nurses. Some



individuals may require a second session. But for the majority one session is enough to completely change how a horse reacts enabling us to safely treat horses in both emergencies and routine appointments. Some of the cases we have dealt with have gone from being incredibly dangerous for vets to enter the stable to standing quietly to have IV injections. The change possible is amazing and has been revolutionary for some of our clients, removing the stress and worry they had regarding calling a vet.



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## What do I do if my horse requires box rest but won't settle in a stable?

Our vets always want to work with you to ensure the best possible solution for your horse. Depending on the weather, it may be possible to create a small corral for your horse rather than confining them in a stable, so it is always worth voicing your concerns to your vet to open up this dialogue. If your horse still won't settle we also have a wide variety of different medications within our armoury to help keep your horse calm. These can include but are not limited to oral forms of ACP, oral anti anxiety medications and calmers.



## What else can I do to keep my horse calm on box rest?

There are a range of different ways to help keep your horse entertained including:

- Walks to grass (if allowed)
- Toys such as treat balls
- Mirrors
- Companionship eg allowing your horse to groom another over the stable door
- Having the radio on
- Hanging the haynet in the middle of the stable or hanging carrots down from the middle of the stable
- Grooming and chatting



## What do I do if my horse is bad or nasty?

No horse is truly a bad horse or nasty, they merely respond to stimulus how they have been trained. This training might have been accidental for example if the horse has back pain they may learn to associate being tacked up with discomfort, as a result that horse might kick out when a saddle is placed on their back or buck when mounted. It is important to pay attention to any such behaviours as they can help guide us to areas of pain and discomfort for your horse. If a horse is truly dangerous it is important to investigate why and to identify if any changes can be instigated.

## Exciting News!

We are delighted this month to have had Katherine Gray joining us. Katherine graduated from Cambridge university before undertaking an internship at the busy Gouldburn Valley Equine Hospital in Australia. After returning to the UK, Katherine then spent 3 years at the Endell Equine Hospital near Salisbury, performing both ambulatory and hospital based duties. During this time she also underwent further study to complete a certificate in advanced veterinary practice (CertAVP).

Katherine moved to East Devon in 2020 initially working at a local ambulatory practice. Katherine enjoys the variety of equine practice, with a particular interest in medical cases. In her spare time she enjoys exploring with her young family and Inca the cocker spaniel.



**And More To Come:** October will also see us welcome two more equine vets Antonia Evans and Laura Freeman. Please do join us in welcoming our new arrivals if you get the chance to meet them out on yards.



[www.summerleaze-vets.co.uk](http://www.summerleaze-vets.co.uk)



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